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ISSUE  
430

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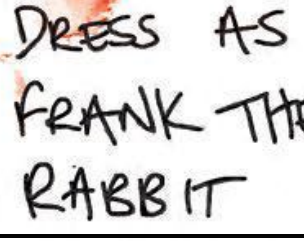



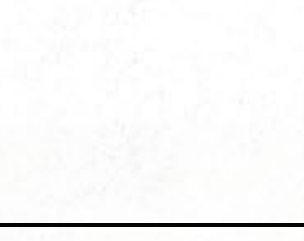

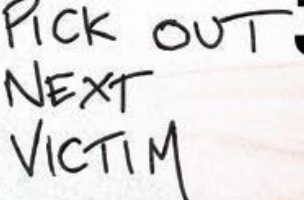




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horror

# OCTOBER 2016

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Photo from STARBURST International Film Fest by Laura Binnie



# STARBURST

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# EDITORIAL

Welcome to STARBURST Issue 430!

Most Editors have a sort of 'Bucket List' of achievements or landmarks that they would like to achieve before their tenure comes to an end. I have managed to tick some off during the last five years (I might share some of them with you one day!). High on my list was to feature the **Universal Monsters** on the cover. It just seemed important to me that these iconic and indelible takes on these classic horror icons should never be allowed to fade away. In this age of green screen, these movies may seem quaint, but their importance can never be overestimated.

If you are of a certain age then you will likely have experienced James Whale's **Frankenstein** and all of the rest of the Universal family of monsters on BBC 2 on the legendary (and much missed) Horror Double Bills of the late '70s. Eighty years before **Marvel Studios** began their world-building project, Universal confidently created probably the first cohesive movie-verse, with every subsequent release after **Frankenstein** in 1931 clearly defining an ongoing narrative where all of its properties coexisted. This was early on in the development of modern cinema, having only just adopted sound, and decades away from the blood flowing red in the Hammer stable. If Universal only got credit for that alone it would be to acknowledge a remarkable achievement, but these movies were superb horror movies. In fact, I would go so far as to state without any doubt that **Bride of Frankenstein** is still one of the best movies ever made, and probably the best sequel of all time. A stunning masterpiece of a film, which modern filmmakers still regard in reverential terms.

With Universal about to reboot these properties for a modern audience (and we save the debate on that one for a later date...), I had the perfect excuse to put these icons on our cover. As we no longer have the benefit of the Horror Double Bills on terrestrial television, this is also a chance for younger readers to find out what all of the fuss was about, as we return to a more innocent era where the art of horror filmmaking was in its infancy, yet managed to make some of the greatest movies ever made, whilst introducing the world to Lugosi and Karloff, and a host of other legends of horror. This was a glorious period of horror cinema, and it is a genuine pleasure to revisit it with you guys.

As always, the cover is not the only reason to buy the mag. We also return to the world of **Harry Potter** with a preview of the imminent release of **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them**.

**Doctor Who** faces off against **Star Trek**, and we encounter the monsters of **D&D** that influenced **Stranger Things**. This is indeed a very *monstery* issue of STARBURST Magazine you hold in your hands (or tentacles, we harbour no prejudices).

Have we still managed to fit in all of your regular columns? Well yes, we have indeed. It's monstrous how much we have managed to fit in. Including the low down on a very eventful few weeks for the writer of this very Editorial. You can read all about it in this month's **It's Only A Movie**. We also welcome the legendary Paul Mount back to **TV Zone**, to bring you up to speed with all worth watching on the small screen (actually they aren't that small anymore, we need a new phrase).

Well that is me done trying to shoehorn in spurious uses of 'monster', go forth and rediscover an era of classic cinema...

Until next time,  
keep watching the weird and wonderful,



*Jordan Royce*

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### STAR

#### IMPATIENT ZERO

It has come to my attention that a lot of people seem to be up in arms about the final episode of THE WALKING DEAD Season Six. When my friend told me about this, I thought maybe because of the levels of violence? It never would have occurred to me the actual reason - it ended on a cliffhanger! That's nothing to complain about!!!! And it's not a new occurrence! This is what TV shows do regularly, to get you coming back for more (and the TV networks).

People are so impatient these days! Is it possibly that the way viewers consume TV shows now is binge watching a

whole season, and sometimes a few seasons within a short space of time, that when they have finally caught up with a show and are on the current season, then have to wait the better part of a year for the new season, they can't handle it. They need to get a grip! They would probably complain that it's boring if there was no cliffhanger. There's no pleasing some folk! Personally, I thought it was a brilliant episode, and love the suspense of waiting for the new season! Not long now!

Stephen, via EMAIL

**THANK YOU STEPHEN! We agree with this 100%!**

### LETTER

#### STARBURST FILM FEST

I loved looking through the feature on the STARBURST International Film Festival that was in issue 429. I could only make it down for two days of the festival but loved every moment, and looking at the photos brought back some wonderful memories.

I saw so many great films and met some wonderful people, including some amazing filmmakers! It was fantastic being able to mingle with the celebrity guests at the event, without them being bundled away from the paying public as they so often are. Just one of the pluses I came away with from the weekend.

My personal highlight was the Ray Harryhausen Foundation talk; I'm so glad I didn't miss that! It was also a nice touch having the wrestling team there. It truly was a celebration of all aspects of cult entertainment!

Bravo STARBURST for putting together such an amazing event. When's the next one?

Mark, via EMAIL

#### PODCASTING ASPERSIONS

Dear STARBURSTers,  
 As a long time reader I was bemused by your response to Ste W's letter in the October edition of your usually fine magazine. You have had a few

letters over the past months that have asked why you do not feature genre podcasts in your magazine. Your usual response is that they are covered on your own podcasts, although this is not really a priority on these shows. This is such a shame, as many of the free podcasts out there are made to professional standards, are free and are continuing stories with complex characters and even more complex story telling. The whole notion of podcasting is only a decade old and is essentially a new form of broadcasting - and yet you refuse to acknowledge it. I have to ask why?

Your response to Ste W - "In the past we have considered covering podcasts in our Audio section but we realised we have the best Podcasts in the universe anyway, we don't need to tell you about any of the others!" - is vacuous and downright arrogant as many podcasts out there - often chart much higher than yours and score numerous rave reviews and awards. I would love to read interviews etc with the creators and have their content treated with the respect it deserves. No doubt there are podcasts out there that I am unaware of and I would like to think that your magazine should be drawing my attention to them rather than burying its head in the sand for whatever reason.

Genre podcasts are often made lovingly and the individuals involved invest a lot of creative spirit into their creations. Surely you should be going some way in promoting what is out there and allowing your readers to access an ever developing region of genre based broadcasting, instead of

just blowing your own trumpet about being the 'best in the universe' which is not backed up by the facts.

Give podcasters fair coverage in your magazine and you will keep a happy reader.

A.Richards, via EMAIL

**Being a long time reader of the mag then surely you know our house style, and that our comment was tongue in cheek? When we stated our podcasts were the 'best in the universe', there was an implicit air of self-deprecation (although we did win a UK Podcasters Award for STARBURST Radio to be fair - here it is on our shelf with a plastic Spock figure.**



**I totally understand that the type of Podcast to which you refer is of a different variety to our chat show/review formats on our Podcasts, and I would have no problem with covering them if there was sufficient demand. I understand that there have been a few emails, but these are literally the only requests we have had. When a new section or area of coverage is introduced it is usually preceded by far more interest than that. That is not to say that we are not up for it. We will have a look at this and gauge whether these Podcasts should be covered in the future.**

Jordan M. Royce  
 Editor

STARBURST

NEXT ISSUE: 431 ON SALE FROM NOVEMBER 18TH

# SALUTE TO THE GODFATHER OF GORE

BY MICHAEL COLDWELL



STARBURST PAYS TRIBUTE TO A REAL CINEMATIC TRAILBLAZER, H. G. LEWIS, WHO UNFORTUNATELY LEFT US IN SEPTEMBER.

**N**ot many filmmakers can truthfully take the credit for starting an entire genre, but that honour gloriously fell to splatter maestro Herschell Gordon Lewis, who has sadly passed away at the age of 90. Creator of *Blood Feast* and a swathe of gruesome follow-ups that terrorised American drive-ins and independent cinemas in the 1960s and early '70s, he defined and refined a uniquely successful formula, becoming the 'Godfather of Gore' to a generation of filmmakers who took the splatter baton and have run with it ever since.

Born in 1926, Lewis initially studied journalism before teaching English then moving into advertising and TV commercials. Seeking a more lucrative home for his talent as a salesman, Lewis joined forces with movie producer David F. Friedman, who had established a reputation for testing the boundaries of censorship with his series of 'nudie cuties'

and 'nudie roughies', which were about as close to pornography as regulations of the day would allow (i.e. not really very rude). Two astute marketing brains were better than one and Lewis and Friedman soon hit upon a concept that would change cinema forever. As Lewis told it: *"I was actively looking for the magic formula, the kind of movies the major companies either couldn't make or wouldn't make"*. Having recently left a cinema perplexed by a 'violent' movie where people had died with typical Hollywood bloodlessness, the answer was staring him in the face: *"Eureka! I'd found it: GORE!"*

Filed over nine days for just \$24,500, 1963's *Blood Feast*, with Lewis both directing and taking one of his frequent cost-cutting cameos as a radio announcer, was a true watershed moment for exploitation cinema. The story of Fuad Ramses (Mal Arnold), a party caterer who murders nubile young

women and harvests their organs, was risible, the 'acting' was patchy at best, but audiences hooked by a luridly effective poster campaign came in droves to see something appalling and sensational. On that count, Lewis well and truly delivered. Achieved using offcuts from local Miami butcher shops, the garishly colourful dismemberment effects Lewis realised were received with astonished delight by the largely teenage drive-in crowds. But nothing had prepared them for *Blood Feast's* coup de grâce, the legendary 'tongue scene', wherein a young woman's tongue is forcefully ripped from her head. Achieved using a (rather large) lamb's tongue dipped in strawberry jam, the notoriety of this sequence spurred Lewis to create ever-more gruesome money shots for each of his subsequent splatter epics.

His next atrocity was the sensitively titled *Two Thousand Maniacs!* (1964),





a bloody update of the classic Scottish legend of Brigadoon. A distinct improvement on *Blood Feast* in terms of production values, it told the story of an ancient enchantment that turns a Deep South townsfolk into an army of murdering savages who pounce upon unwary tourists. When he reflected many years later on the movie's jaw-dropping USP of a voluptuous young woman getting a very large boulder dropped on her from a great height, Lewis was quick to point out that his screen deaths may have been violently graphic, but, unlike many modern horror movies that emphasised suffering, they were at least very quick. He was definitely on to something there.

Despite deliberately restricting his movies to drive-ins and theatres in Southern states where censorship was more relaxed, Lewis now began to feel the heat of regulation breathing down his neck. Sensing he needed to make hay while the sun still shone, he completed his 'Trilogy of Blood' with *Color Me Blood Red* (1965). The story of an artist in search of the ultimate blood-coloured paint, it marked the end of his partnership with Friedman and a temporary cessation of the gore production line while he returned to the 'nudie cuties' to consider his next move. Opting to try and live with

the new censorship rules on graphic bloodletting he'd inadvertently helped to bring about, Lewis returned with vampire epic *A Taste of Blood* (1967), an altogether more mainstream effort with much reduced gore. Not unexpectedly, audiences were unimpressed and voted with their feet.

Girding his loins for more censor-bating, Lewis dived straight back into the gore pit with renewed vigour. This period brought not just classics like *The Gruesome Twosome* (1967, nubile young girls murdered and scalped) and *The Wizard of Gore* (1970, nubile young girls - seeing a trend here? - in delayed stage-slicing), but also an entertaining diversion into Russ Meyer territory with female biker gang murder-fest *She Devils on Wheels* (1968).

Following completion of *The Gore Gore Girls* in 1972, Lewis turned his back on filmmaking, but that didn't mean his subsequent career as an entrepreneur was any less eventful. As well as writing over twenty books on everything from successful business management to plate collecting, he established a hugely successful direct marketing agency and even found time in the 1970s to serve three years in jail for a series of enterprisingly fraudulent schemes,

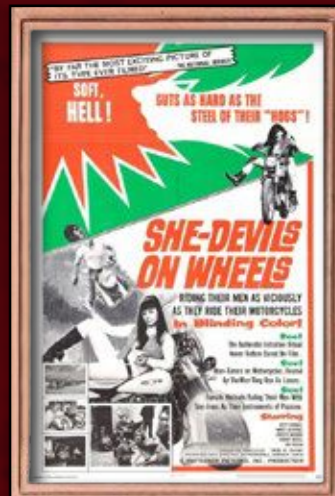
including fake car rental and abortion services (separate, we assume) funded by the bank against cinemas he claimed to own but actually didn't. In 2002, in a rare misjudgement of the zeitgeist, he made a one-off return to the director's chair with *Blood Feast 2: All You Can Eat*, an unsatisfying sequel that delivered some accomplished splatter but lacked the charm and bizarre whimsy of the original. Times had changed.

Despite being fêted and cited since the 1980s by fans and fellow filmmakers, Lewis wore his splatter crown lightly and with great humour, always willing to concede his movies' budgetary and acting limitations. As he saw it, he was a businessman first and foremost who had seen a lucrative gap in the marketplace and exploited it ruthlessly, timing his move to perfection.

Herschell Gordon Lewis was a true cinema pioneer who made the previously impossible possible. For better or worse, the torrent of blood and guts he released in the 1960s will never stop flowing. STARBURST raises a large glass of claret to the Godfather of Gore for a remarkable life well lived.



**HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS**  
(1926 - 2016)





# THINGS TO COME

A ROUND-UP OF THE  
BEST (AND WORST)  
OF THIS MONTH'S  
MOVIE / TV NEWS



## DC

Na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na-na-na-na... Batman! Or should that be **The Batman**. Yes, after months of speculation, the title for Warner Brothers' upcoming solo outing for Ben Affleck's Dark Knight will indeed be simply **The Batman**. But it's not only a confirmed title that the movie now has, for it's also cast its 'big bad'. Last month's **TTC** brought word that master assassin and all-round mercenary Slade Wilson, aka Deathstroke, would be the main villain of the film, and this past month has seen Joe Manganiello land the Deathstroke gig. Manganiello may be familiar to many of our readers for playing Flash Thompson in Sam Raimi's **Spider-Man** trilogy. As well as battling the World's Greatest Detective in **The Batman**, Zack Snyder has also teased that Slade may well turn up in his **Justice League** when that arrives in November 2017. A cameo appearance there would be the perfect way to introduce Deathstroke to casual fans ahead of him taking centre-stage down the line. **The Batman** is currently being written by Ben Affleck and DC's iconic Geoff Johns, with Affleck to also direct the film (which has yet to be given an official release date).

The last time we saw Affleck's Caped Crusader was in David Ayer's **Suicide Squad**, and a key component of that film was Margot Robbie's Harley Quinn. Well now comes some further developments on another big screen outing for Harleen Quinzel. It had previously been reported that some sort of Harley Quinn-based spin-off movie was on the horizon, and it's now been revealed that Robbie will be co-producing just such a film. The Australian actor has signed a 'first look' deal with Warner Brothers that will see her develop and produce projects for The WB. One such project is another outing for The Joker's main squeeze, which Robbie will be co-producing through her LuckyChap Entertainment banner. No exact details are known on the picture itself right now, but previous stories suggested that, rather than a straight-up Harley solo movie, the film would instead feature an array of female DC characters such as Batgirl, Black Canary, Huntress, and potentially Karen Fukuhara's Katana. Robbie became hugely interested in DC's female characters when doing research for her Harley Quinn gig, and it was her who brought up the notion of doing a movie consisting of some of DC's females.

Elsewhere in Warner Brothers' DC Extended Universe, **The**

**Flash** has brought in **Almost Famous** and **Watchmen**'s Billy Crudup as Dr. Henry Allen, the father of Ezra Miller's Barry Allen. Crudup joins a cast that includes the aforementioned Miller, and Kiersey Clemons as Iris West. Also set to have a part to play in the film is Ray Fisher's Vic Stone/Cyborg. To be directed by **Dope**'s Rick Famuyiwa, **The Flash** is currently set for an early 2018 release, although Ezra Miller's Scarlet Speedster will be next seen as part of Zack Snyder's **Justice League**. As for Crudup, up next for him is Ridley Scott's **Alien: Covenant**.

One DC hero who *won't* be turning up in Warners' DCEU is Booster Gold. That's the word according to Greg Berlanti, at least. For the past several months, there's been talk of Berlanti working on a big screen outing for Booster Gold, and that's still the case, but he's revealed that the film won't be connected to the DCEU at all, instead being a completely separate entity 'with no connective tissue to those worlds'. At present, Berlanti is set to produce the Booster Gold picture, although he's also suggested he'd be open to directing the film should the chance arise. Berlanti will likely be familiar to many for executive producing shows such as **Arrow**, **The Flash**, **DC's Legends of Tomorrow**, and **Supergirl**. Zack Stentz, who co-wrote the likes of **X-Men: First Class** and **Thor**, is already putting together a screenplay for the Booster Gold movie, and certain rumours have the film down as a 'buddy cop' sort of adventure with Booster and Blue Beetle. For those not familiar with Booster Gold, he's a longtime fan favourite character who debuted in 1986. Initially living in the 25th century, Michael Jon Carter travels back in time to the present day where he uses his knowledge of future technology to become a cocky, sponsor-adorned, insta-smiling hero.

Taking the action to the small screen, The CW's four-show crossover event has revealed just what threat will be bringing some of DC's finest together. **Arrow**, **The Flash**, **DC's Legends of Tomorrow**, and **Supergirl** will be having a giant crossover this December, and the reason for that will be The Dominators. An alien race driven by advanced technology, this nefarious presence will be on a mission to wipe out mankind. Coming together to stop this evil will be the likes of Green Arrow, The Flash, Supergirl, Martian Manhunter, Rip Hunter's Legends, and potentially even Superman!

Upcoming show **Krypton** has found its two leads. As Seg-El, Superman's grandfather and the main focus of the show, is **Florence Foster Jenkins'** Cameron Cuffe. He'll be joined by **King Arthur: Legend of the Sword**'s Georgina Campbell as Lyta Zod, daughter of General Alura Zod. **Krypton** will largely be based around Seg-El, and will see him fighting to bring honour and redemption to the House of El after it had been shamed and ostracised, whilst he also partakes in a forbidden romance with Lyta. David S. Goyer is executive producing the show, which is due to start shooting in Serbia later this year.

Set to join the slew of DC-based shows currently on TV or in development is a Black Lightning series. FOX has ordered a pilot commitment for the show, with the hope to then take it to a full season. This will be the third collaboration between FOX and DC Entertainment, with **Gotham** and **Lucifer** already airing on the network. Greg Berlanti is working with **The Game**'s Mara Brock and Salim Akil to develop the show. The character of Black Lightning has been around since 1977 when Tony Isabella and Trevor Von Eeden introduced Jefferson Pierce, a former Olympian who has the power to control and create electromagnetic fields. Working as a high school principal, the death of one of his students prompts Pierce to use his powers to fight the good fight, adopting the Black Lightning moniker in the process. AP



## PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES



Excitement is mounting (said no one) for the next instalment of the movie inspired by a theme park ride has revealed its first teaser poster. This time, Captain Jack Sparrow is on the search of Poseidon's trident. Orlando Bloom (who wisely skipped the last film) and Geoffrey Rush return to play their regular characters. While Johnny Depp's Sparrow is something of a cool cult character, the last few films have certainly been lacking [certainly not in length - yawn -Ed] and there really doesn't seem to be much of a zeitgeist around this fifth entry to the franchise at the moment. If that changes nearer the May 27th, 2017 release date, we'll be sure to let you know.

## MARVEL

The big news where Marvel movie properties are concerned this month centres on Hugh Jackman's Wolverine. Having been known as just **Wolverine 3** for the past six months or so, the final outing for Jackman's Logan will be titled, err, **Logan**. But that's not all, for the film may well feature long-time fan favourite villain, Mister Sinister. There are conflicting reports on whether Sinister will actually appear in the movie, but he'll definitely have a presence. Since **X-Men: Apocalypse**'s post-credits sting saw an Essex Corp. briefcase, many presumed that we'd be seeing Nathaniel Essex, the crazed, genius scientist with a penchant for cloning and evolution who goes by the alias of Mister Sinister. One person we *do* know will definitely be turning up, though, is X-23. Who is X-23, you ask? Why, she's a young female Wolverine clone who will come about as a result of said Essex Corp. cloning. As we go to print, there's reports out there that **Daddy's Home**'s Sienna Novikov will be playing the character, but there's nothing official on that front as yet. Elsewhere, Richard E. Grant, somebody whose unknown role in the film was rumoured by some to be Mister Sinister, has now been confirmed to be playing evil scientist Dr Zander Rice. Rice will be heavily involved in the cloning element of the film, and he'll also be working alongside the nefarious mutant cyborg group, The Reavers. On that front, Boyd Holbrook's role in the film has now been revealed to be Donald Pierce, a former member of the Hellfire Club and now the leader of The Reavers. To be directed by **The Wolverine**'s James Mangold, **Logan** is currently shooting ahead of a March 3rd, 2017 release.

In some Marvel Cinematic Universe news, **Black Panther** has found one of its key villains. **Person of Interest**'s Winston Duke will be playing M'Baku, aka Man-Ape, in the Chadwick Boseman-starrer.



The comic book Man-Ape is able to call upon magical, mystical powers in his quest to take the King of Wakanda mantle as his own. Already announced for the film is Michael B. Jordan as the villainous Erik Killmonger, so Boseman's T'Challa will certainly have his hands full when Ryan Coogler's **Black Panther** arrives in February 2018. Elsewhere in the MCU, **Jurassic Park**'s Sam Neill has revealed that's he got a small role in Taika Waititi's **Thor: Ragnarok**. No details are known on Neill's role, but he'll be reteaming with Waititi following the excellent **Hunt for the Wilderpeople**. This will also mark a reunion for Neill with **Jurassic Park** co-star Jeff Goldblum. The next outing for Chris Hemsworth's Thunder God is set for November 2017.

In one of the most intriguing (and potentially bonkers!) news stories of this past month, 20th Century Fox has picked up the rights to the life story of Stan 'The Man' Lee. And not just that, but the studio plans to make a '70s-set action-adventure movie with Lee as the central character. Producers Marty Bowen and Wyck Godfrey are on board to oversee the film, with is currently without a title but is being described as having a similar vibe to **Kingsman** and the Roger Moore-era **James Bond** efforts.

In small screen Marvel news, having impressed in **Marvel's Luke Cage**, Simone Missick has confirmed that her Misty Knight will be joining the fight in **Marvel's The Defenders**; the 2017 Netflix mini-series that will bring together Charlie Cox's Daredevil, Krysten Ritter's Jessica Jones, Mike Colter's Luke Cage, and Finn Jones' Iron Fist. And also announced this month, courtesy of an announcement at New York Comic Con, is the news that the 'big bad' of **The Defenders** will be none other than **Alien** icon Sigourney Weaver... although details of her character are being kept hush-hush right now.

Another rumoured to be involved in **The Defenders** is Jon Bernthal's Frank Castle. On that note, this past month has seen shooting commence on **Marvel's The Punisher**, with a bearded Bernthal back to cause chaos and carnage for New York's criminal element. The series has seen three big name additions, too, with Ebon Moss-Bachrach, Ben Barnes, and Amber Rose Revah joining Bernthal; **Girls**' Moss-Bachrach will be playing Micro, a former NSA analyst whose secrets will be of great value to Castle; **The Chronicles of Narnia**'s Barnes will be Billy Russo, a best buddy of Frank's from his Special Forces days... and the man in the comic books who becomes the villainous Jigsaw; and **Son of God**'s Rose Revah will be playing Dinah Madani, a top-end Homeland Security agent who isn't too keen on the methods of Frank Castle. When we'll see **Marvel's The Punisher**, though, is yet to be confirmed. At first, it was said that the series wouldn't land on Netflix until at least 2018, but a recent leaked image suggested that the show may actually debut next year. AP

## WAR FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES

The synopsis for **War for the Planet of the Apes** was released ahead of footage from the film being screened at this year's New York Comic Con.

The new official blurb reads:

*'In War for the Planet of the Apes, the third chapter of the critically acclaimed blockbuster franchise, Caesar and his apes are forced into a deadly conflict with an army of humans led by a ruthless Colonel. After the apes suffer unimaginable losses, Caesar wrestles with his darker instincts and begins his own mythic quest to avenge his kind. As the journey finally brings them face to face, Caesar and the Colonel are pitted against each other in an epic battle that will determine the fate of both their*



species and the future of the planet.'

We have to admit, when it was announced that the whole **Planet of the Apes** franchise was to be rebooted again with 2011's **Rise of the Planet of the Apes**, we were just a tad worried. After all, like most fans of this beloved franchise, we were still a little burned from Tim Burton's ill-conceived **Planet of the Apes** redo back in 2001. Luckily for us, it turns out that **Rise** and its 2014 follow-up, **Dawn of the Planet of the Apes**, are phenomenal movies that have brought a whole new spark to a franchise long-believed to be dead. With **Dawn's** Matt Reeves back to direct **War**, this upcoming threequel is right at the top of 2017's most hotly-anticipated movies.

Andy Serkis and Judy Greer are back to ape around as Caesar and Cornelia, respectively, and the ominous Colonel is to be played by the ever-great Woody Harrelson.

At present, **War for the Planet of the Apes** is set for a worldwide release on July 14, 2017. AP

## horrorchannel

### A round-up of what not to miss this month on Horror Channel...

#### OCTOBER 23RD - AMITYVILLE 3 (1983)

Sure, the law of diminishing (or should that be demonishing?) returns applies, but this third instalment of the original **Amityville** saga is still kind of fun, even without the 3D effects that made it a must-see back in the day. It's directed by the legendary Richard Fleischer (**Soylent Green**, **Fantastic Voyage**, **10 Rillington Place**) so can't be all bad, right? Watch out for soon-to-be star Meg Ryan and a great cast of cult actors such as Tony Roberts, Candy Clark, and Lori Loughlin.

+++

#### OCTOBER 30TH - LET THE RIGHT ONE IN (2008)

The original Scandinavian version of the bestselling novel is a beautifully horrific work of art. The story of a painfully shy twelve-year-old boy whose friendship with a strange young girl next door aids him with his bullying problem. But is she connected to the spate of murders that have been happening locally? Literally do not miss this if you haven't seen it.

+++

#### OCTOBER 31ST - V/H/S (2012)

What better way to celebrate Samhain than a great anthology of terror? Some segments work better than others - as is always the case - but, for us, that opening story in which a misogynistic group get their just deserts is a corker (and has been made into a feature). Great directors such as Ti West, Adam Wingard and Joe Swanberg provide the scares.

+++

#### NOVEMBER 11TH - MISCHIEF NIGHT (2013)

Not content with being blind since a car accident that killed her mother, Emily (Noell Coet) must fight off a psychotic intruder and protect her loved ones.

+++

#### NOVEMBER 12TH - HORSEMEN (2009)

Dennis Quaid (**Inner Space**) plays a detective, recently widowed, whose grief is interrupted when he discovers a serial killer's connection with the Biblical Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

+++

#### NOVEMBER 13TH - CHAIN LETTER (2009)

More teen terror as a murder targets those who refuse to pass on the letter. Nikki Reed (**Twilight**) joins genre icons Brad Dourif (**Child's Play**) and Keith David (**The Thing**) in the nerve-shredding terror.

+++

The fantastic anthology series **Tales from the Darkside** returns to send chills down viewers' spines. Produced by legendary George A. Romero, and starring some huge names, make sure you put it in your planner. Elsewhere, there's a chance to catch **Star Trek** creator Gene Roddenberry's **Earth: Final Conflict** from the beginning from November 16th.

**Horror Channel is available on SKY 319, Virgin 149, Freeview 70, Freesat 138 and TalkTalk 487.**



## THE TERROR

With Dan Simmons' bestselling novel **The Terror** being adapted into an AMC series, the network has moved to announce that Jared Harris will be headlining the show.

AMC revealed that the actor, best known to genre fans for the likes of **The Quiet Ones** and the **Poltergeist** redo, has nabbed the lead role in the upcoming horror series.

The basic premise of **The Terror** finds the action set in 1847 as a Royal Naval expedition crew are attacked and stalked by a mysterious predator as they carry out a search mission for the Northwest Passage.

In the show, Harris will play Francis Cozier, the Captain of the HMS Terror and the man second-in-command when it comes to the expedition as a whole. A brilliant sailor and skipper, he's somebody who has become disillusioned with the Navy life, feeling that he's hit a glass ceiling due to the politics involved in the gig. Also on board for the series are Ciaran Hinds, Paul Ready, Adam Nagaitis, and Tobias Menzies.

On the addition of Harris, AMC's Joel Stillerman said, "The story of a man's battle with nature and an unknown predator makes **The Terror** a gripping and imaginative series, and calls for a special kind of actor. We are thrilled to expand our relationship with Jared Harris and look forward to watching him transform into the complex and fascinating character of Captain Crozier. We are also delighted to work with this versatile and talented cast and share with audiences the despair and horror inside this journey of survival, hope and recognition."

David Kajganich and Soo Hugh will be serving as executive producers, writers and co-showrunners.

Production on **The Terror** begins later this year in Budapest ahead of a 2017 premiere. The series will be made up of ten one-hour episodes. AP

## AND FINALLY...

After the success of the live-action version of **The Jungle Book**, Disney has confirmed director Jon Favreau will be making a similar corporal version of **The Lion King**. While we can't deny the box office power of the redo of the Rudyard Kipling story, we can't help but feel a little sad that the House of Mouse can't, you know, come up with something new...

+++

Chloë Grace Moretz is the latest name to sign up for the American version of Dario Argento's classic **Suspria**, having dropped out of Universal's reimagining of **The Little Mermaid**. She joins the previously-announced Tilda Swinton, Dakota Johnson, and Mia Goth. Moretz is no stranger to remakes, having already featured in the recent do-overs of **The Amityville Horror**, **The Eye**, and **Carrie**. She also has previous for giving foreign films a US polish with **Let Me In** back in 2010. Argento himself has already gone on record to voice his disapproval of one of his most beloved movies being remade.

We should expect the new version sometime in 2017.

TTC 430 stories by Martin Unsworth, Andrew Pollard. Edited by Martin Unsworth



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# UNLEASH THE BEASTS!

## RISE OF THE UNIVERSAL MONSTERS



**We figured it was time we looked way back into cinema history; to a time when horror cinema was burgeoning and one studio ruled the screens with their arsenal of fantastic beasts and creatures of the night...**

**A**lthough we might think they're pretty tame now, the Universal Horror movies of the 1930s and 1940s actually created in *Dracula*, *Frankenstein's Monster*, the *Mummy*, the *Wolf Man* et al a bunch of monsters that, at the time of their release, shocked and scared audiences and pushed the envelope in terms of screen gruesomeness and brutality – that is, until the censors stepped in and turned these rampaging beasts into family-friendly spooks. So let's find out more about the classic Universal monsters and how they ultimately lost their fangs.

*"Dracula is not really a human being, so he cannot conceivably cause any trouble."* That was the verdict of the censors when they first read the script of Universal's *Dracula* in 1930. The fantastical nature of the vampire Count led officials of the then newly formed Hays Office (the censorship body led by Will H. Hays tasked with administering the Production Code, aka the 'Hays code') to seriously underestimate the effect that *Dracula* would have on an unsuspecting American public caught in the midst of the economic disaster known as the Great Depression.

Universal had first considered an

adaptation of *Dracula* as early as 1915, and then again in 1920 and 1925 (according to some sources, also in 1927, after the play's successful run in London and on Broadway). Universal's owner, Carl Laemmle, had himself vetoed the adaptation, afraid it would be too 'gruesome' for family audiences. It was his twenty-three year old son, Carl Laemmle, Jr. - Universal's Head of Production - who gave it the go-ahead precisely because of those same factors that had caused Universal and other studios to reject the property before then: things 'that made people gasp and talk about it such as the bloodsucking scenes.'

Despite Bela Lugosi's lounge lizard portrayal of the Count, Junior Laemmle and director Tod Browning front-loaded gruesomeness in *Dracula* - depicting the Count and his brides emerging from their coffins. This macabre reveal near the beginning of the film presents *Dracula* as a supernatural monster upfront. And there are indications that Browning and Laemmle may have originally planned to emphasise more strongly the vampire's bite. It's written in the final shooting script that during the bloodsucking sequences, *Dracula* was to display 'fang-like teeth'







and that bite marks on Lucy's neck (now mentioned only in the dialogue) were to have been shown in close-up in other scenes. These details were probably deleted because of considerations of the Production Code, which stipulated that brutal killings were not to be presented in detail. So if you thought the idea of a Dracula with fangs only began with Christopher Lee, think again!

Another aspect of *Dracula* that goes overlooked nowadays is how much of a sexual predator Lugosi's Count is. Tod Browning followed Laemmle's wishes in the shooting of the film, except, notably, in the scene in which Dracula bites Renfield (Dwight Frye). Perhaps again bearing in mind the Production Code, Laemmle, Jr. had advised that Dracula should 'go only for women and not men.' However, in following the producer's note to remove the scene in which the three vampire women bite Renfield, Browning substituted the perhaps even more transgressive action of Dracula's biting another male (the discrete fade to black as Dracula advances on the prone Renfield heightens the homoeroticism). The decision was also made during production to increase the number of Dracula's visits to Mina's

(Helen Chandler) bedroom from one to two, giving the film another seduction scene. (Incidentally, early artwork for *Dracula*'s poster depicted the vampire descending on a sleeping female victim with prominent nipples. [*The woman's nipples, obviously – not Lugosi's – Ed.*])

Before it was released, the Hays Office canvassed the views of preview audiences for *Dracula*, a number of whom commented negatively on the film, calling it 'unwholesome and ghastly; morbid, inhuman and pointless,' and 'a gruesome, hideous, ghastly, horrible nightmare.' Among the audience was a PTA chairman, Marjorie Ross Davis, who left after the first fifteen minutes, later declaring that the film "should be withdrawn from public showing." *Dracula* was widely condemned as being unsuitable for children and received numerous complaints.

But for every audience member who objected to its mix of sex and morbidity, dozens of others lapped it up; *Dracula* was a box office smash, turning the cloaked Count into a pop culture icon. Universal wouldn't actually cast Lugosi again as the Count until *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* in 1948 (although

his unmistakable visage made a brief appearance in *Dracula's Daughter* in 1936); but by then, Dracula had been defanged as a character by his inclusion in the insipid 'monster rallies' of the 1940s – *House of Frankenstein* (1944) and *House of Dracula* (1945) – played by the distinctly unfrightening John Carradine – and before that *Son of Dracula* (1943), where he was portrayed by the bloodless Lon Chaney Jr.

Universal created an arguably even bigger icon in the Monster played by Boris Karloff in *Frankenstein* (1931). The Jack Pierce make-up has been much parodied over the years, making the Monster loveable to the kiddies, but bear in mind that this is a creature sewn together from bits of dead bodies. Pierce approached the design from the standpoint of gruesome realism: bolts in the neck to conduct electricity, clamps in the forehead to secure the top of the skull that had been sawn open to allow the replacement of the brain, stitches around the wrists where new hands had been sewn on to the arms. In fact, James Whale's masterpiece is filled with references to the desecration of the dead and the violation of corpses.







When *Frankenstein* was previewed, no-one anticipated the strong reaction of the audience, which arose partly from the shock effects of the film's sound. From the opening scenes of grave robbing, the shots of the body hanging from a gibbet, to images of medical cadavers and human brains, to the reanimated corpse of the Monster itself, audiences in 1931 had no cinematic frame of reference for the gruesome imagery of *Frankenstein*. And while some may have been used to horror pictures of the silent variety, they were caught off-guard by the heightened realism that sound brought to screen horror, the impact of which, in the hands of a knowing director like Whale, could be positively brutal on the unsuspecting viewer.

Indeed, the preview audience's startled response was such (people got up, walked out, came back in, walked out again) that Universal executives, including Laemmle himself, went into panic and immediately started to order changes to the film, involving the elimination of scenes such as the drowning of the child (Marilyn Harris) by the monster ("No little girl is going to drown in one of my pictures!" Carl Laemmle, Sr. famously exclaimed). Whale

successfully argued for the scene to stay in, having already shortened it himself prior to the preview (although several state censor boards would later cut it out of the picture anyway). Later, when the film was submitted to the Hays Office for reissue in 1938, the scene was removed for all territories and would remain so for almost fifty years.

The impact of *Frankenstein* was such that the film was initially banned in a number of American towns and cities, such as in Massachusetts and Kansas. But like 'Drac', 'Frank' has become a cuddly spook, a Herman Munster-Halloween mask; something not helped by the casting of Lugosi, Glenn Strange, and Chaney Jr. as the Monster in the various 1940s sequels, from *Ghost of Frankenstein* (1942) onwards. None of these actors managed the pathos and menace of Karloff, but instead reduced the Monster to a blind, staggering caricature, with arms held aloft as he bumps into the scenery.

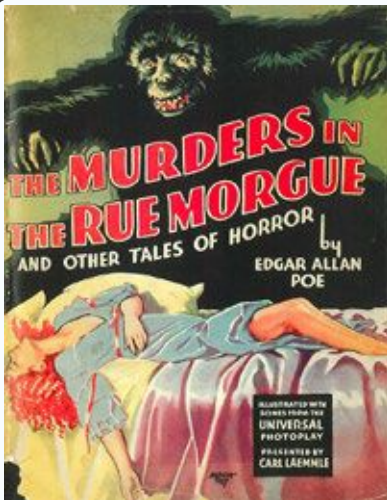
The original *Frankenstein* smashed box office records, eclipsing even *Dracula* in terms of its financial success. 'Frankenstein unreeled at RKO Downtown theater yesterday before audience that

jammed place to doors and kept long line of standees waiting to get in for the second showing. It chilled them. It thrilled them. Everybody shivered and all had a great time,' reported the *Detroit Mirror* on November 21st, 1931. 'Frankenstein clicks,' *The Film Daily* enthused on November 27th, 1931: 'Results of premiere showings of *Frankenstein* in Detroit, Washington, Milwaukee, Lawrence, Mass. and Providence have convinced Universal that the public is still going for shockers'.

But what exactly was it about *Frankenstein* that made it 'click' with audiences and critics of the time? The *New York Times* (December 5th, 1931), described it as 'a stirring grand guignol type of picture... It is naturally a morbid, gruesome affair, but it is something to keep the spectator awake, for during its most spine-chilling periods it exacts attention.' The *Motion Picture Herald* (November 14th, 1931) objected to the film's 'dreadfully brutal' scenes that carry 'gruesomeness and cruelty just a little beyond reason or necessity,' but added, 'I have a hunch that people may rush to see *Frankenstein*.' *Variety* (December 8th, 1931) commented that 'appeal is candidly to the morbid side... [the] maximum of shock is there.'





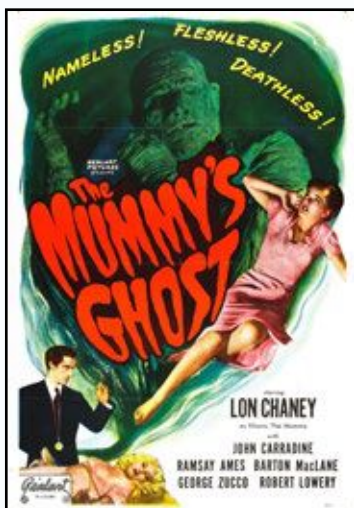


Universal capitalised on the shock value of *Frankenstein* with their next film in the cycle, *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932), which Carl Laemmle, Sr. described as 'red hot and grisly, and packed with the kind of dynamite that can be detonated by smart brains'. The main monster of *Rue Morgue* is a gorilla called Erik, played by Charles Gemora, who Bela Lugosi tries to mate with a human woman in order to advance the evolution of mankind (!). In fact, the mating of women with gorillas had become popular (in the movies at least) since the release of *Ingagi* (1930), a film about a tribe of simian-worshipping women. But the fascination with gorillas as horror film monster stretches back even further to First National's *Go and Get It* (1920), in which the brain of an executed convict is transplanted into a rampaging ape. Gorilla movies would, of course, culminate in *King Kong* in 1933, which gave us in the shape of a fifty-foot tall ape one of cinema's greatest (and most brutal) screen monsters. However, the real villain of *Rue Morgue* is Lugosi's mad scientist, Dr. Mirakle, and it is he, rather than Erik, who perpetrates the film's most shocking murder in which a prostitute is crucified on a wooden cross while Lugosi attempts to take samples of her 'rotten

blood' to see if she is worthy of mating with Erik. The scene caused uproar with the censors, and was snipped from the release print in many territories. In fact, it remains testimony to just how shocking those Universal monster movies were in the days before the Production Code was more rigidly enforced after 1934.

Universal's next great screen monster came in the shape of *The Mummy* (1932). Karloff plays an ancient Egyptian priest called Imhotep who is revived from mummification after his tomb is disturbed by unwitting archaeologists. Make-up genius Jack Pierce created Karloff's Mummy by applying spirit gum, cotton and a mixture of alcohol and ether to the actor's face, rubbing clay into his hair and wrapping him with bandages that had been treated to look aged. The film's single most iconic image shows in close up the mummified Karloff upright in his tomb - his eyes slowly opening after the incantation has been recited that brings him back to life. However, the most memorable - and disturbing - monster sequence is the work of the film's director, Karl Freund, whose contribution has often gone unsung. We see the mummified Imhotep return to life and terrify an

archaeologist into hysteria, before retrieving the sacred Scroll of Thoth, the parchment that holds Imhotep's power. Reviewers of the time warned audiences that this scene in particular was decidedly horrific: the archaeologist (played by Bramwell Fletcher) 'going quite mad, laughs in a way that raises the hair on the scalp,' wrote the *New York Times* critic (January 7th, 1933); the *New York Daily News* confirmed, 'the screams of Bramwell Fletcher will chill your blood.' The scene's horrific effect results from Karl Freund's decision to exclude the Mummy itself from the camera frame, instead holding on the victim's graphic response to it having come to life; the source of the horror is Fletcher's shocking reaction rather than the sight of the Mummy itself. The effect on







viewers in 1932 was made all the more powerful because Freund chose not to show the action.

In *After Dracula*, her book on 1930s horror films, academic Alison Peirse reflects on the oral testimonies of British cinemagoers in the 1930s who watched *The Mummy*: 'The awakening sequence is repeatedly identified as a particularly terrifying moment in the memories [of interviewees], many of whom were children at the time.' Key to the power of the scene is that, according to film scholar Paul Jensen, it 'involves viewers by requiring attentiveness and imaginative collaboration [and] the result is both understated and intense.'

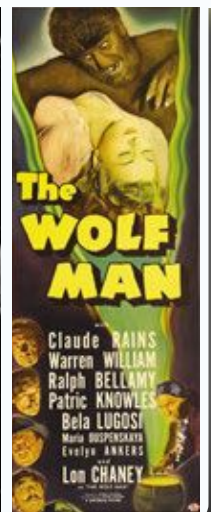
Arguably, viewers would not be confronted with such a frightening Mummy again until Christopher

Lee took the role in the Hammer version in 1959. Like *The Terminator* (1984), the essence of the Mummy is that, in the words of *Terminator*'s Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) "it can't be bargained with, it can't be reasoned with, it doesn't feel pity, or remorse, or fear, and it absolutely will not stop, ever, until you are dead". It's hard to think of a more relentless monster; but again, over the years, the image of a terrifying Kharis or Imhotep has been softened to that of a shambling Scooby Doo spook trailing its cosily familiar bandages behind it. Universal is partly to blame for that, having revived the Mummy in the forties for a series of sequels that got progressively worse - *The Mummy's Hand* (1940), *The Mummy's Tomb* (1942), *The Mummy's Ghost* (1944), *The Mummy's Curse* (1944) - until *Abbott and Costello Meet the Mummy* proved to be the final nail in poor Imhotep's sarcophagus in 1955.

Lon Chaney Jr. essayed the role in five Mummy pictures, three for Universal. Chaney's distinctly unthreatening screen persona made him the perfect Universal horror star of the watered-down forties films after *The Wolf Man* (1941) became a surprise hit. Universal had tackled

lycanthropy in *Werewolf of London* (1935) but it was the Chaney film that really caught on with audiences, and brought the character of Larry Talbot, aka the Wolf Man, into Universal's pantheon of great horror monsters.

By far the most popular saga of 1940s mainstream horror, *The Wolf Man* spawned a franchise which spanned four films and lasted America's entire involvement with the war from Pearl Harbor to the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945; according to historian David J. Skal, popular culture during World War 2 became fascinated by 'the wolf' - the werewolf, the beast that must be defeated. 'The wolf is an ancient symbol, deeply linked to militarism and the battlefield', writes Skal in his book, *The Monster Show*, 'with special meanings in Norse and Teutonic mythology.' Skal comments that Hitler himself took pride in his Christian name which meant 'noble wolf', and was fascinated by lycanthropy. Moreover, in Larry Talbot and his continuing quest to put to rest his wolf-self, Skal recognises an 'unconscious parable of the war effort'. The winning of the war becomes equated, in other words, with the vanquishing of the beast within, the inherent violence within all men. At a time when news images from the war were censored, the







*Wolf Man* films represented the war effort as the battleground of the soul, of the evil that must be defeated within.

The famous motto from *The Wolf Man* (invented by scriptwriter Curt Siodmak and passed off as a traditional folk saying) – “even a man who is pure in heart and says his prayers by night, may become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms and the autumn moon is bright” – is a prelude to Talbot's transformation into a werewolf. One of the abiding images of the Universal monster movies is that of Chaney's face slowly morphing into that of a hairy beast. *The Wolf Man* and its sequels, for example, made extensive use of the stop motion dissolve techniques developed for Paramount's *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in 1931, but the effect is milder - less repulsive and horrifying in the *Wolf Man* films than it was in Rouben Mamoulian's ground-breaking adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel, providing another example of how screen monsters became tamer as the 1930s gave way to the 1940s. Universal would reprise the character in *Frankenstein meets the Wolf Man* (1943), *House of Frankenstein* (1944), and *House of Dracula* (1945).

*House of Dracula* (1945) effectively brought Universal's second horror cycle to an end. By then, it seemed that the studio had run out of interesting things for their monsters to do. The Universal horror movies had devolved from thrilling adult entertainment in the early '30s to safe adolescent programming by the mid-'40s. The genre had become exhausted, but had also been neutered by the stricter enforcement of a Production Code which expressly forbade anything that it deemed 'excessively gruesome, brutal or horrific'. Although prior to this, the studios had exercised an element of self-regulation, the tightening of the Production Code after 1934 reflected a renewed moral conservatism that gradually changed Hollywood filmmaking in the run-up to the Second World War. Producers were actively discouraged from making horror pictures and scripts were more closely vetted by the Production Code Administration than they had been previously.

Carl Laemmle, Jr., had almost complete authority over what projects would be produced at Universal partly because his father owned the studio. To an extent, Universal was sympathetic to

the horror genre and respected their writers, producers, and directors. It was Laemmle, after all, who turned the horror film into Universal's signature genre after the success of *Dracula*. However, the Laemmles lost Universal to a corporate investor in 1936, and Junior was replaced as production chief. After *Dracula's Daughter*, the 'new' corporate Universal ended the production of horror pictures entirely for three years, only resuming it again in 1939 with *Son of Frankenstein*.

But by then, Hollywood had changed; the films being produced were safe. The once rampaging Universal monsters, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein's Monster*, and *The Mummy*, were kept very much on their leashes during the second horror cycle in the '40s, sanitised for a family audience. It would take Hammer in the late fifties - with *Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) and *Dracula* (1958) - to restore them to their former beastliness.

But that, as they say, is another story...





## The UNIVERSAL MONSTERS died out in the fifties, but they weren't content to stay buried, as we discover...

The release of *Creature from the Black Lagoon* in 1954 arguably brought the original Universal Monsters run to a close. Like any good undead movie monster, though, they would not die and they've been revived over and over again. The Universal Monsters are some of cinema's earliest nightmares and yet they have endured for over eighty years now in a way no other horror series has. The 1931 *Dracula* established the template for the cape-wearing King of the Vampires that movies and TV would follow for decades. Boris Karloff as Frankenstein's monster was so ingrained in the public consciousness that when Hammer came to make their own version nearly thirty years later they were forbidden from using any make-up design that might resemble

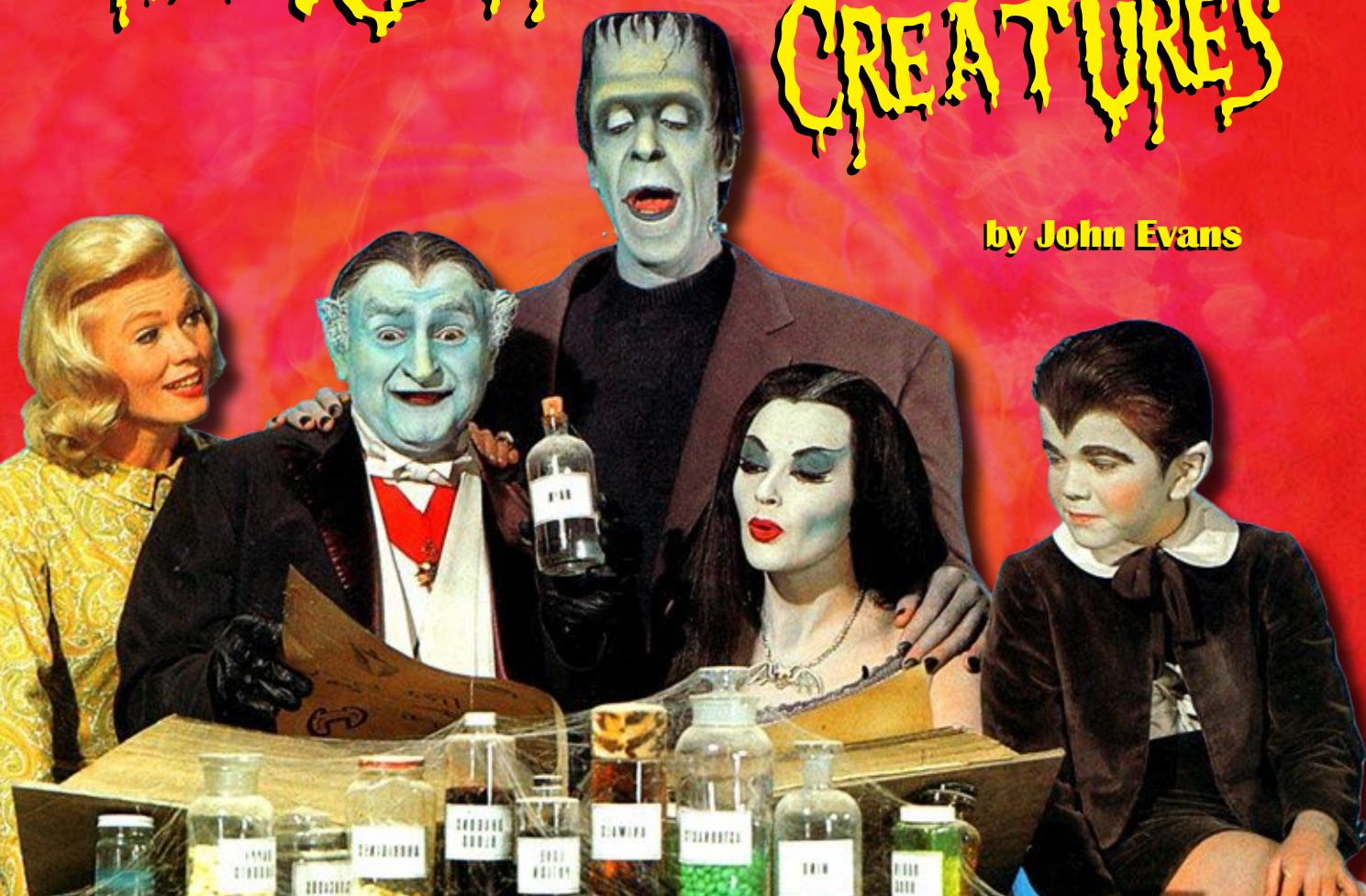
Jack Pierce's iconic - and copyrighted - creation. Movies gave way to television in the '50s and '60s, and tastes in horror changed in the '70s towards the more intense and extreme (for example with *The Exorcist*). This has happened again and again since then, but mention Frankenstein's monster to most people and Karloff's shambling, heavy-lidded creature is almost certainly still the first that comes to mind. What happened after that classic period and how have the Universal Monsters maintained their place in popular culture? Well, let's find out.

If you were a kid (or adult) in the US in the late '50s and into monsters and horror, it was a golden time. Movie theatres were full of aliens and giant bugs created by radiation. Innovators like Hammer would bring a new level of blood and terror to cinema screens. What had once terrified people in cinemas across the world only two decades earlier had now come to television and a new audience was enjoying getting scared by *Dracula*, *The Mummy*, and *Frankenstein*. This time, the audience was made up largely of children. In October 1957, Universal released a package called 'Shock Theater' to television; over 50

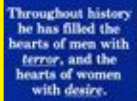
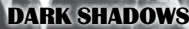
movies that included all of those early classics and famous characters. Parents were aghast but kids were thrilled. This period would last well into the '70s and spawn a legion of 'Horror Hosts' such as Zacherley, Vampira, Svengoolie, Bob Carter, and Elvira, as reruns gathered new fans of Bela Lugosi et al. Magazines sprung up to capitalise on this new fascination. *Famous Monsters of Filmland* started in 1958 as a one-off but due to huge demand became a best seller and inspired countless others. Kids who sat enthralled by these old horrors started their own fanzines to write about and share their enthusiasm. These 'Monster Kids' dressed up for Halloween as their favourites, ordered posters, masks, model kits and toys from magazines, and started clubs to connect with others. What this managed to achieve is something unexpected - the horrifying Universal Monsters became mainstream. It wasn't long before Shock Theater that monsters had a bad reputation, encouraging juvenile delinquency, a huge concern in the '50s as the modern 'teenager' came into existence - or worse, getting young people into the occult. That wouldn't happen in this modern age though - Harry Potter fans? Of course not!

# THE RESURGENCE OF THE CREATURES

by John Evans







like *Castle of Frankenstein*, along with numerous others, were still going. In amongst articles on newer horror heroes like Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, and Christopher Lee you could find serious articles on the legacy of Lugosi, or a retrospective on the films of James Whale, director of the first two Frankenstein movies. A new critical perspective was being born. Kids that had sat hypnotised by Shock Theater had grown up, but instead of consigning their early fascinations to childhood they were instead re-evaluating them. This was the birth of a new legitimacy for Universal Monsters that continues today.

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men and women who made  
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than ever before, but still has enough to recommend it, especially the now infamous disco-light love scene (director John Badham had made *Saturday Night Fever*, after all). Hitting screens at the same time as Werner Herzog's version of *Nosferatu* and the spoof vampire flick *Love at First Bite* did it no favours and it was considered a disappointment. If the studio had ideas of reviving any of the other monsters, they were now on hold. Despite all this, the new format of VHS ensured *Dracula* would eventually become a financial success across the '80s. VHS also meant re-releases of the original cycle of movies too, and this introduced them to another new audience. Although the films had long lost their ability to inspire fear, people had come to respect them as classics of the genre. It wasn't just cinema and re-releases that had kept the characters alive in culture. Television, in the form of children's shows, had continued to reference the Universal Monsters. 1976 saw the debut of the short-lived *Monster Squad* Saturday morning show, which found wax models of Dracula, Wolf Man, and Frankenstein's monster brought to life and fighting crime to atone for their past sins. Similarly, in 1980, cartoon *Drak*

*Pack* found the descendants of Dracula, The Wolf Man, and Frankenstein's monster trying to make up for their ancestors' crimes by defeating supervillain Dr. Dred and his OGRE organisation. OGRE stood for The Organisation for Generally Rotten Enterprises. Although not a Universal production, the character designs were obviously inspired by the Monsters.

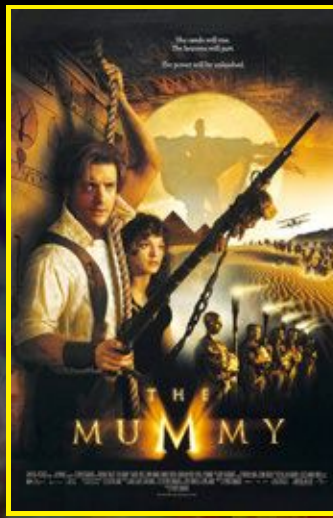
As those Monster Kids grew up, some of them started making films too. For many of a certain generation, *The Goonies* is one of the films they grew up watching over and over again. The Universal Monsters helped inspire the 'other' Goonies of the 1980s, *The Monster Squad* (no relation to the earlier show). Although it tanked in theatres, and was only given one VHS release in 1988, word of mouth helped cement its cult status across the next couple of decades. A group of young kids, who call themselves the Monster Squad, discover Dracula's plan to plunge the world into darkness has brought him to their small town, and they might be the only ones who can stop him. It's not just Dracula they have to contend with as he's brought The Wolf Man, Frankenstein's monster, the Mummy, and the Creature

with him. Clearly inspired by a love of the Universal Monsters, *The Monster Squad* gives us a fun homage not just to them but a well-spent Monster Kid youth. That cult status saw the film given the full special edition DVD and Blu-ray release a few years back and it's well worth hunting down. Along with VHS, the '80s and '90s had formats like LaserDisc to release the original films, often with censorship removed (the LaserDisc release reinstating things like Renfield's death screams that had fallen foul of the Production Code when first shown in cinemas) and the opportunity for supplemental materials to be included. These films were now being considered as not just ephemeral entertainment to re-watch, but collector's items and cultural history too.

In 1999, Universal decided to revive another of the old guard for the cinema. A loose remake of the Karloff original, *The Mummy* takes the bones [groan] of the story and marries it to Indiana Jones-style adventure. As in the 1932 film, newly-revived Egyptian high priest Imhotep seeks to bring back his dead lover, the Pharaoh's mistress. Brendan Fraser and Rachel Weisz inadvertently help resurrect him and when Imhotep decides



**The MONSTER SQUAD (1987)**



**SUPERNATURAL - 'Monster Movie'**



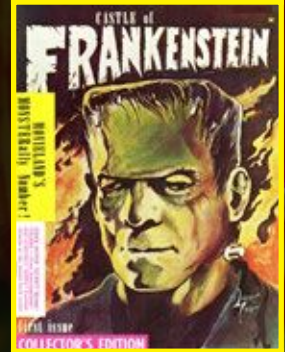
**DRACULA UNTOLD**



Weisz is the perfect vessel to use for his lover, their only route to survive is to stop Imhotep and send him back to the land of the dead. A surprise smash success at the box office, it would lead to diminishing returns across two sequels, a spin-off featuring The Rock, and a cartoon series. This remake might have been a huge hit, but it wasn't the only way that Universal's icons were staying with us. *The Mummy* director Stephen Sommers would go on to resurrect the other monsters in the execrable *Van Helsing*. 2010's *The Wolfman* was a noble but ultimately failed attempt to mount a serious reimagining of the 1941 classic. In other mediums, author Jeff Rovin wrote *Return of the Wolf Man*, a 1998 novel based on the Universal Monsters, and a direct sequel to the Universal movies. Other books would follow, reintroducing the characters and continuing their stories. Every Halloween, someone somewhere dresses as Lugosi's Count or wears a Frankenstein mask. *Supernatural* lovingly parodied the films in the episode 'Monster Movie'. Film historians like Gregory William Mank and Gary D. Rhodes, amongst numerous others, have through passion and research treated these films with seriousness and helped build a new critical consensus that

these films are not just genre treasures but some of the greatest films ever made. Mark Gatiss devoted the 'Frankenstein Goes to Hollywood' episode of his superb *A History of Horror* series in 2010 to what he considers to be one of the three greatest periods for horror films, and his love for Universal and, in particular, James Whale's *Frankenstein* films dominate. The original films were released a few years ago in a lavish Blu-ray set that shows people's enthusiasm for them remains undimmed.

Universal isn't finished with them on the big screen either. In 2013, plans were revealed for a shared universe that would see all of the monsters brought back. There's a potential worry that the desire to build huge franchises via shared universes will take the focus away from giving each film the attention and creative spin it needs to bring these characters to a fresh audience. 2014's *Dracula Untold* was a dispiriting mishmash of previous *Dracula* films, but despite this was considered a modest financial success and encouraged Universal to press on. Sofia Boutella and Tom Cruise have been filming the first official entry in the series, a new version of *The Mummy*. Whether there's new life in the old monsters, we'll find out soon enough. Either way, we'll still have the originals and happily it seems they truly will never die.



**The Legendary Editor of  
FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND:  
FORRY ACKERMAN**



# MONSTER DEALS

by Jack Bottomley

## AS THIS ISSUE LOOKS AT FANTASTIC BEASTS, WE TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK BACK AT THE MOST FANTASTIC ONES OF ALL IN THE UNIVERSAL MONSTERS AND THE FANG-TASTIC MERCH THEY INSPIRED

In recent merchandise pieces, we've had to endure classic pop culture phenomena like *Star Wars*, *Batman*, and *Star Trek* having their dignity sold off by some truly bizarre and sexualised items. So it comes as somewhat of a relief to see a brand that has kept its iconic integrity - the world of Universal Monsters. Back in the classic days of the original movies, an era that kind of fizzled out with hokey offerings like the Abbott and Costello mash-ups (though the brand has lived on and is set to be rebooted), merchandise was in short supply for these 'adult' horrors. But as the '50s saw Universal re-release its spook-tacular classics, a new generation of kids with a creature craving and fake fangs in their gobs were engrossed and thanks to Saturday TV shows boasting beasties aplenty, monsters were cool again... and in the '60s Universal's classic cads became the ghoulish face of this monster mania. We had a wealth of products to scour, and many movie merchandising crypts to prise open, so join us as we do the mash... the monster merch mash!

### AURORA MODELS

(Aurora Plastics Corporation, 1961)



The classic models by Aurora Plastics are the Transylvanian castles of monster gear. Starting out in the '50s, Aurora made their name crafting model kits of cars and aircrafts, so naturally the next logical step was disfigured

opera dwellers and hairy horrors, or at least it was when the company acquired the Universal Monsters licence. This was not the company's first foray into TV/film tie-ins but their Universal Monster kits, starting with Frankenstein's creature measuring 19 inches (the model, that is) in 1961, were their most popular models, running until 1966. The range included the likes of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and even *King Kong* and has undergone various re-issues in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. Not bad to say that initially the Aurora team were so hesitant that the line would work, they assigned child psychologists to find out whether kids would be mentally scarred by the models... oh, how times change.

### POSTAL STAMPS

(USPS, 1997)



Ah... postal workers, depending on your view they are unsung heroes or badly organised letterbox-bothering baddies (we personally love our punctual mag-delivering postal team), but they hit a home run in 1997. In the '80s, culture shifted and headed into a very violent '90s decade and the cape twirling Universal Monsters were in decline. That is, until the US Postal Service introduced these awesome Universal Monsters Postage Stamps, which single-handedly led a monster renaissance as, appropriately, these characters rose from the grave and enjoyed a huge pop culture boom again.

### MONSTER I-SCREAM SPOONS

(Universal Pictures Co, 1963)



Even monsters need a bit of brekkie, though we doubt *Coco Pops* were on the menu, with these novelty i-Scream (hey, the puns are our job!) spoons, which came in red or yellow and were moulded on Lon Chaney Jr.'s *Wolf Man*, *The Creature From The Black Lagoon* and *Boris Karloff's Frankenstein's monster & Mummy*. The send off forms even had serving suggestions like 'Deep Creep Sodas', 'Cool Ghoul Sheik-Shake' and 'i-Scream Sundaes'. God bless their re-animated hearts.

### PAINT BY NUMBERS SETS

(Craft House, 1975)





You have to give it to Craft House - not only did they make Paint by Numbers sets interesting, they actually sold these sets brilliantly, boasting glow in the dark and 'scary pre-mixed oil' colours. Lon Chaney Sr.'s The Phantom of The Opera, Frankenstein, The Mummy, and The Wolf Man made up the series and each are a rare find nowadays, especially in mint condition, where they can go for a few hundred dollars at auction.

## FLASHER FACES

(AHI, 1981)

Another brand, another spin on the good ol' torch, or as AHI saw fit to call them 'Flasher Faces', which sound like a description for some kind of skin therapy but were actually little torches with detachable monster heads to fasten over the torchlight. The Wolf Man and Frankenstein were the only varieties available in this hardly illuminating toy, which featured a kid scared to death of a lit up face on the box card art... seriously, if that scared you, you'd have cacked yourself actually watching one of the films.



## CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON SQUIRT GUN

(AHI, 1973)

This squirt gun from AHI may seem like a simple piece of kit, but if you are a collector of all things from the Universal Monsters merch crypt, this is one of the dream finds. One of the rarest novelty products made, this water gun modelled on the creature from the 1954 flick was for sale for \$3000 on one Universal Monsters collector's site!

Well, where there's a gill, there's a way!

A green, gill-like water gun shaped like the head of a creature, possibly a shark or monster, with a red trigger. The creature's head is green with a lighter green gill-like texture. It has large, white eyes with red pupils and a wide, open mouth showing sharp teeth. The water gun is mounted on a black base. The entire image is framed by a thick red border.

## PADDLE BALL GAMES

(Imperial Toy Corp, 1990)

Throwing a ball at the face of Bela Lugosi's Dracula or any incarnation of the total count (that's not an auto correction this time) would be tantamount to having moonlit tiffin with Larry Talbot, but in the case of this game it's encouraged. The



ball on a string paddle game is an age-old time wasting kid's toy, and as they go, these Universal Monsters-themed ones are pretty nifty.

## COMPLETE PRAYER CANDLE SET

(Etsy, 2015)

Back in 1975, we had Rapco's Candle Making Sets moulded (pun intended) after The Wolf Man and Frankenstein, but over on Etsy there were these, shall we say, enlightened Universal Monster-themed prayer candles that feature our cinematic creatures in various states of faithful poses. We've heard of believing in or worshipping monsters, but this is ridiculous



## FRANKENSTEIN SPEAKER

(Actwell Plastics Corp, 1964)



If you fancy Monster Mashing to Bobby 'Boris' Pickett and the Crypt-Kickers' Halloween party hit, this Frankenstein's Monster speaker is p-u-u-u-u-u-rrrrrgggh-hh-fect. Mind you, you'll need pockets as deep as a drop from the top of Notre Dame Cathedral to nab one. Originally priced at \$5.98, this is a huge collector's item now and can sell, in mint condition, for around \$10,000 or more! Shocking... wonder if anyone will be listening to STARBURST Radio through one out there? Do write in if so!

## MONSTER BOOTLEG FIGURES

(Sungold, '90s)



With every zeitgeist comes a shitegeist in the form of bootleg merchandise, although some of the figures in Sungold's '90s Monster toyline were not all that bad. True, certain monsters appeared to be doing a half-arsed version of the robot dance and there appears to be a Freddy Krueger and a Joker in the series (Joker meets Mummy and The Wolfman, now there's a film idea!), but collectors have become attached to this toyline all the same.

## FRANKENSTEIN HALLOWEEN BUCKET

(Clinton Plastics, 1965)

When it comes to Dr Frankenstein's most famous creation, despite being all bits and bats, he clearly draws in a crowd. And this Frankenstein Halloween Bucket is yet another huge hit among collectors but... you guessed it... it's a rare one, so rare, in fact, that no mint condition version (minus sun damage and colour fading) is known to exist. Modelled on Glenn Strange's incarnation of Mary Shelley's landmark monster, which made its debut in 1944's *The House of Frankenstein*, this candy collector buckets upwards of \$500 depending on condition.



## MONSTER SOAKIES

(Colgate, 1963)

In the '60s, Colgate released a string of soakies (bubble bath) based on cartoon characters, but in 1963, it was the Universal Monsters' turn. These foamy freaks are quite collectable nowadays, though most are sold empty or pre-used.





## MONSTERMOBILE

(Renzi, 1964)



This plastic toy from Renzi may look massively basic by today's standards, with its creepy carpool of Universal Monster characters painted entirely pink and green and sat stoically behind the wheel of a hot rod. However this was quite a popular and beloved toy - after all, what is neater than imagining this sinister quartet out for a drive about town? They drive collectors crazy (#CheapPun) today, going for over \$1000 at some auctions.

## DON POST MASKS

(Don Post Studios, 1963)

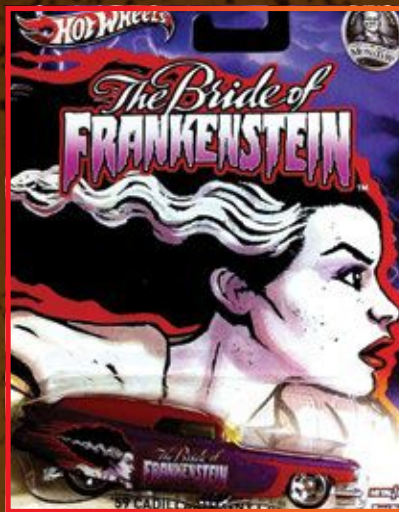


Don Post Studios are a legendary name in the field of quality latex rubber masks and back in the '60s, most kids would be salivating like The Wolfman at suppertime at the sights of the studios' Universal Monsters range. Many may fondly recall the masks being advertised in the pages of 'Famous Monsters of Filmland' magazine; mind you, the then hefty price tag of around \$34 meant that mums and dads would need some mighty big convincing.

## THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN CAR

(Mattel, 2012)

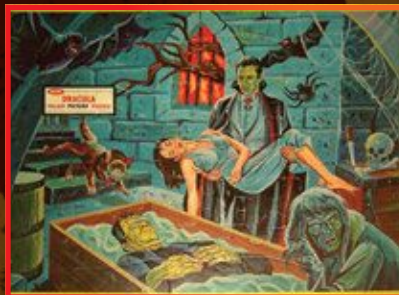
The white stripe-haired Elsa Lanchester as The Monster's bride in James Whale's influential 1935 Universal picture *The Bride of Frankenstein* is a lingering image in all of cinema, but we never remember her joyriding round in a horse and carriage let alone a '59 Cadillac. Enter this neat little homage by Mattel in



2012, which was part of the Hot Wheels Universal Monsters line.

## JIGSAWS

(Jaymar, 1963)



Jaymar's Universal Monster-themed jigsaws (Dracula, Frankenstein, and The Wolfman) were a hoot (or should that be a howl?). Each of the three sets tick all the boxes: monsters, check; petrified onlookers, check. Hell, one even has Frankenstein's Monster throttling The Wolfman in a laboratory! What more could you ask for?

## MONSTER OLD MAID CARD GAME

(Milton Bradley, 1964)

Milton Bradley's vintage card game is still a nicely put together piece of Universal Monsters merch to this day, with its terrific old school colour scheme and nicely designed array of monster cards featuring a who's who of the Universal Monster universe (from Dracula's Daughter to The Phantom of the Opera). The game was essentially a kids' twist on the Victorian card drinking game and is still to be found knocking about at many auctions online.



## UNIVERSAL MONSTERS PEZ DISPENSERS

(PEZ Candy, 1965)

An interesting dose of nostalgia, even if Frankenstein's Monster looks like Halloween's Michael Myers nursing a boo boo on his noggin. Today, these PEZ Candy Dispensers are a difficult and valuable find; in our search we saw a complete set for nearly £900. Sweet!



## POP-TOPS

(Multiple Plastics Corp, 1964)

Some products had a strange appeal back in the day and Multiple Plastics Corp's Pop-Top Monsters encouraged you to unleash your inner mad doctor, with these head-popping figures, which allowed kids to interchange their heads (the figures, that is, not the kids) with one another. 'Create Your Own Monsters', said the slogan, which was a bit of a stretch with these pretty basic incarnations of The Wolfman, Mummy and the like. Also, while being sold as 'Pop-Top Unbreakable Horrors', these toys have ironically not aged well, with many becoming brittle as the years went by, so finding a set completely undamaged can be rather difficult.



## THE MAD MONSTER SERIES

(Mego, 1973)

The legacy of Mego figures is one that is well renowned among generations and among people who collect classic figures. And while not promoted as Universal Monsters, Mego's 'The Mad Monster' line was another interesting assembly. The series was an extension of the 'Official World's Greatest Super Heroes' collection (super heroes? Really?) and were unusual to say the least. The unlicensed figures clearly took influence from Universal's versions with the likes of 'The Dreadful Dracula' and 'The Horrible Mummy' (bit rude), although their Wolfman looked like an Alsatian in wet weather gear. Still, this line was among the first and best-articulated monster figures out there.





# STAR WARS™

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## DESTINY

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Who would win a duel between Count Dooku and Luke Skywalker? Kylo Ren and Jango Fett? With *Star Wars™: Destiny*, you can take any battle you can imagine between our favorite *Star Wars* heroes and villains and play it out on the tabletop. Assemble your team, customize your deck, and conquer your opponent!



# IT IS YOUR DESTINY

[FANTASYFLIGHTGAMES.COM/SWDESTINY](http://FANTASYFLIGHTGAMES.COM/SWDESTINY)

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# WHO'LL TRUMP WHO?

By Iain Robertson  
and JR Southall

**WHO'S THE GREATEST?  
OR, ALTERNATIVELY,  
IS IT TREK THAT'S  
THE GREATEST? IT'S  
TARDIS VS ENTERPRISE  
IN OUR UNIQUE, IN  
NO WAY COPYRIGHT-  
INFRINGING BEASTLY  
TRUMPS.**

**F**or more than half a century now, television's two biggest sci-fi franchises have duked it out in the battle for supreme superiority. Now, STARBURST can settle things once and for all, in the most definitive\* way possible – by pitting the two series' greatest, deadliest and most terrifying monsters against one another in a battle to the death! (Okay, in a round of Trumps). In the red corner, the Doctor's greatest adversaries – Daleks, Cybermen and, um, Kraals! In the blue, the Federation's deadliest enemies – Gorn, the Xindi and a cloud creature that looks suspiciously like dry ice! Be warned, this game is not for the faint-hearted. There is, in fact, only one Trump more terrifying than the ones on these pages – and currently he's running for president of the United States...

\* in no way definitive

## DALEK



Screeching, ballet dancing upturned dustbins from the planet Skaro, the Daleks are actually the war machines of the hideously mutated Kaleds and the creation of crazed one-eyed scientist Davros. They're the Doctor's deadliest enemy and the Time Lords' Time War nemeses.

**Earliest appearance: 1963 (The Survivors)**

<b>Size:</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Strength:</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Scare factor:</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>Believability:</b>	<b>93</b>

## MACROVIRUS



Beware the Delta quadrant traveller who encounters this deadly virus. Millions of times larger than a regular virus, it took the combined skills of the Doctor and Janeway to cure this uncommon cold.

**Earliest appearance: 1996 (VOY: Macrocosm)**

<b>Size:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Strength:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Scare factor:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>Believability:</b>	<b>56</b>



## MONOID



Cycloptic slave race from ten million years in the future, the Beatle-barneted Monoids accompanied the last remaining humans on a journey to colonise the planet Refusis, but fostered a revolution after carving a Monoid head on a giant human statue. Are known to use kitchens as prisons.

**Earliest appearance:** 1966 (The Ark)

<b>Size:</b>	5	<b>Strength:</b>	11
<b>Scare factor:</b>	15	<b>Believability:</b>	19

## CETI EEL



After it decimated his group of super-humans, Khan learned to utilise the Ceti Eel's insidious mind control powers for his own ends. Entering through the ear, its young wrap around the cerebral cortex, causing pain, madness and death! In that order.

**Earliest appearance:** 1982 (The Wrath of Khan)

<b>Size:</b>	2	<b>Strength:</b>	3
<b>Scare factor:</b>	46	<b>Believability:</b>	70

## SILENCE



The Silence are a religious order with a particularly well developed defence system – and a crazily convoluted plan to kill the Doctor, by having his wife assassinate him while underwater in a spacesuit. Or something. You'll forget this card as soon as you stop looking at it.

**Earliest appearance:** 2010 (The Lodger)

<b>Size:</b>	7	<b>Strength:</b>	19
<b>Scare factor:</b>	42	<b>Believability:</b>	83

## THE BEAST OF EL-ADREL IV



The almost-invisible beast stalked Picard and Tamarian captain Dathon on the surface of El-Adrel IV, alternatively interrupting and aiding their attempts to communicate. Almost like a metaphor for something.

**Earliest appearance:** 1991 (TNG: Darmok)

<b>Size:</b>	7	<b>Strength:</b>	23
<b>Scare factor:</b>	39	<b>Believability:</b>	82

## KRILLITANE



With a predilection for chips and small children, the Krillitanes were urbane teachers by day and bat-like monsters by night, with a unique evolutionary habit of adopting certain characteristics of whatever races they conquered. Bizarrely, their own oily by-product is poisonous to them.

**Earliest appearance:** 2006 (School Reunion)

<b>Size:</b>	7	<b>Strength:</b>	17
<b>Scare factor:</b>	34	<b>Believability:</b>	69

## SALT VAMPIRE



The tragic Salt Vampire of planet M-113 could assume the identity of anyone it chose in order to get close to its victims. Loved ones, colleagues, even one's fantasies could be imitated in order to trap its unsuspecting prey, who died in agony as the salt was drained from their bodies.

**Earliest appearance:** 1966 (TOS: The Man Trap)

<b>Size:</b>	5	<b>Strength:</b>	16
<b>Scare factor:</b>	21	<b>Believability:</b>	24



## NIMON



Parasitic bull-headed creatures who would drain a planet of its resources after invading via transmat machines powered by black holes produced by creating enormous circuit-styled power complexes, having initially pretended to be gods. With very deep voices and skinny, Spandex-clad legs.

**Earliest appearance:** 1979 (The Horns of Nimon)

<b>Size:</b>	6	<b>Strength:</b>	19
<b>Scare factor:</b>	17	<b>Believability:</b>	37

## DIKIRONIUM CLOUD CREATURE



A nightmare from Kirk's past! This creature resembles a harmless cloud – until it strikes, draining its victims' bodies of red corpuscles. Having killed Kirk's crew eleven years previously, it returned to haunt the Captain and hunt the Enterprise!

**Earliest appearance:** 1967 (TOS: Obsession)

<b>Size:</b>	10	<b>Strength:</b>	N/A
<b>Scare factor:</b>	15	<b>Believability:</b>	10

## KRAAL



The Doctor's Oseidon adventure involved the Kraals, short, ugly, brutish, pig-like creatures whose home world was ravaged by radiation, and who decided the best way of escaping was by making a perfect replica of Devesham, complete with robotic replicas of the English village's inhabitants.

**Earliest appearance:** 1975 (The Android Invasion)

<b>Size:</b>	5	<b>Strength:</b>	17
<b>Scare factor:</b>	28	<b>Believability:</b>	60

## SUR-SNAKE



When visiting the planet Argo, Kirk's shuttle proved no match for the hideous Sur-Snake. Transformed into water breathers by the planet's inhabitants, the captain and Spock have only one chance to return to normal – capture the Sur-Snake and extract its venom!

**Earliest appearance:** 1973 (TAS: The Ambergris Element)

<b>Size:</b>	9	<b>Strength:</b>	25
<b>Scare factor:</b>	16	<b>Believability:</b>	26

## AUTON



The Autons were the foot soldiers of the plastic-animating Nestene Consciousness, the rank and file appearing as shop window dummies but the more sophisticated variety able to develop an affinity for p-p-p-pizza and impersonate Roman soldiers. But not David Beckham. Yet.

**Earliest appearance:** 1970 (Spearhead from Space)

<b>Size:</b>	5	<b>Strength:</b>	16
<b>Scare factor:</b>	41	<b>Believability:</b>	77

## XINDI INSECTOID



The most nightmarish of the five Xindi species, these bug-eyed monsters frequently struck terror into the hearts of Jonathan Archer's crew. Their primitive appearance and indecipherable language masked an utter ruthlessness in their quest for the total annihilation of Earth!

**Earliest appearance:** 2003 (ENT: The Xindi)

<b>Size:</b>	4	<b>Strength:</b>	14
<b>Scare factor:</b>	30	<b>Believability:</b>	78



## KANDYMAN



Not so much curing with kindness as smothering with sweetness, the Kandyman was Helen A's pet psychotic robot killer, a dead ringer for Bertie Bassett and the reason why no one on Terra Alpha was quite so unhappy as when they were smiling!

**Earliest appearance:** 1988 (*The Happiness Patrol*)

<b>Size:</b>	7	<b>Strength:</b>	14
<b>Scare factor:</b>	18	<b>Believability:</b>	22

## MUGATO



Looking like the mutant offspring of a gorilla and a unicorn, the hideous Mugato preyed on the inhabitants of the planet Neural. Their deadly poison almost put an end to the intrepid Captain Kirk. Not to be confused with that guy from Zoolander.

**Earliest appearance:** 1968 (*TOS: A Private Little War*)

<b>Size:</b>	6	<b>Strength:</b>	18
<b>Scare factor:</b>	14	<b>Believability:</b>	22

## OOD



Hailing from the same solar system as the Sensorites, the Ood developed an external brain that they carry around in their hands, making them peculiarly defenceless and ripe for enslavement. It is unknown whether they are able to recognise one another without helpful numbered sashes.

**Earliest appearance:** 2006 (*The Impossible Planet*)

<b>Size:</b>	5	<b>Strength:</b>	14
<b>Scare factor:</b>	36	<b>Believability:</b>	73

## GORN



Single combat with the Gorn provided Kirk with one of his most formidable challenges. Despite their slow movements and strangely rubber-like appearance, Gorn are fiercely intelligent, and their reptilian captain was more than a match for the Federation's finest.

**Earliest appearance:** 1967 (*TOS: Arena*)

<b>Size:</b>	6	<b>Strength:</b>	24
<b>Scare factor:</b>	26	<b>Believability:</b>	16

## CYBERMAN



A stark warning about the dangers of body enhancements, the Cybermen evolved on the Earth's upside-down twin planet Mondas, or were developed by the Cybus Corporation here on Earth, depending on which parallel universe you're visiting. Both versions feature jug handles for ears.

**Earliest appearance:** 1966 (*The Tenth Planet*)

<b>Size:</b>	6	<b>Strength:</b>	21
<b>Scare factor:</b>	37	<b>Believability:</b>	81

## HENGRAUGGI



Abandoned by Spock on the surface of Delta Vega, the young Kirk probably thought things couldn't get much worse. Little did he know the planet's inhabitants were none-too-friendly. Fortunately, the Hengrauggi chased the commander right into... Spock!

**Earliest appearance:** 2009 (*Star Trek*)

<b>Size:</b>	9	<b>Strength:</b>	24
<b>Scare factor:</b>	43	<b>Believability:</b>	96



# OUTSIDE THE BOX

ALL THE NEWS  
FROM THE WORLDS  
OF DOCTOR WHO  
WITH KIERON MOORE



## THE RETURN OF DOCTOR MYSTERIO

With all the excitement over a fifty-year-old story, let's not forget that work is continuing on brand new **Doctor Who**, too. This month, the production team has begun rolling on the upcoming Christmas special, entitled *The Return of Doctor Mysterio*, with Matt Lucas' character Nardole returning in the episode alongside Peter Capaldi's Doctor. The plot will see the two of them encounter a spandex-clad superhero in modern-day New York.

Previously seen in last year's Christmas special *The Husbands of River Song* as a lackey of the eponymous archaeologist, Nardole ended up as a decapitated head kept alive inside a robot. He's somehow got himself out of that unfortunate situation by this year's episode, though it's not yet clear how. Lucas will then go on to star in several episodes of next year's Series Ten, this time also joined by Pearl Mackie as new companion Bill.

The superhero, currently known only as Grant, is played by Justin Chatwin, star of the recent **American Gothic** series, and from the short teaser screened at the recent New York Comic Con, it looks like the caped crime fighter will be joining the Doctor in helping a child. The episode also stars Charity Wakefield as an investigative journalist, and is inspired by Steven Moffat and Peter Capaldi's memories of Christopher Reeve Superman films being broadcast on Christmas Day.

The director of the Christmas special this year is Ed Bazalgette, who directed Series Nine's *The Girl Who Died* and *The Woman Who Lived*.

## Re-Animation of the Daleks

Though it may not seem that long since **Doctor Who** last celebrated a fiftieth anniversary, this November marks the big five-oh for Patrick Troughton's Second Doctor, whose first story, *The Power of the Daleks*, premiered on November 5th, 1966. To mark the occasion, the BBC has announced that a fully

animated version of the six-part story has been produced, to be released online and on DVD this month.

Only ever broadcast once in the UK, *The Power of the Daleks* features Troughton's Doctor, shortly after his regeneration, visiting the planet Vulcan with companions Ben and Polly. Here they meet a scientist who's trying to reanimate seemingly subservient Daleks and who won't heed the time travellers' warnings that the old pepperpots may be dangerous. It's no big spoiler to say that things end up getting shooty.

The animation has been completed by the team behind a similar job on lost **Dad's Army** episode *A Stripe for Frazer*, led by producer and director Charles Norton, with character designs from **Doctor Who** comics artists Martin Geraghty and Adrian Salmon. They've also made use of original audio recordings and taken inspiration from surviving film clips and photographs. Norton said: "*The Power of the Daleks* animation is the most ambitious **Doctor Who** archive restoration ever attempted and we're all very honoured to be a part of such an exciting project. Intelligent, suspenseful and magnificently staged, *Power of the Daleks* is one of the great lost classics of 1960s television and a superb example of the black and white era at its finest."

Paul Hembury, Executive Producer at BBC Worldwide, added: "*Charles and his team are remarkably talented and passionate about **Doctor Who** and we are thrilled that fans will soon be able to enjoy this rather sinister but wonderful, classic story.*"

Beginning on November 5th, the serial will be released on the BBC Store, one episode a day, over six days, and US viewers will get to see it on BBC America on November 12th. A Region 2 DVD release will follow on November 21st.

## CLASS Release Date; Capaldi to Guest

The BBC has confirmed that the first two episodes of **Class**, the new **Doctor Who** spin-off from YA author Patrick Ness, will launch on the online BBC Three on Saturday October 22nd. Titled *For Tonight We Might Die* and *The Coach with the Dragon Tattoo*, these episodes will later receive a BBC One broadcast. Excitingly, it's also been confirmed that the first episode will feature an appearance from Peter Capaldi as the Doctor, who will set the Coal Hill students an important task...

The official synopsis reads: "*It's a new term at Coal Hill Academy, and students are preparing for their Autumn Prom. But when the school comes under attack, four alienated students must form an unlikely alliance to defeat them. And this incursion is only the beginning. Charlie (Greg Austin), April (Sophie Hopkins), Ram (Fady Elsayed) and Tanya (Vivian Oparah), assisted by their physics teacher Miss Quill (Katherine Kelly), are charged with a great responsibility by the mysterious alien known as the Doctor (Capaldi) to guard against the creatures of nightmare that want nothing more than to find a way through to Earth and take it for their own.*"

Commenting on his appearance in the spin-off, Capaldi said: "*The **Doctor Who** family is growing, and it's fantastic to be able to welcome the young new cast of **Class** into the Whoniverse.*"

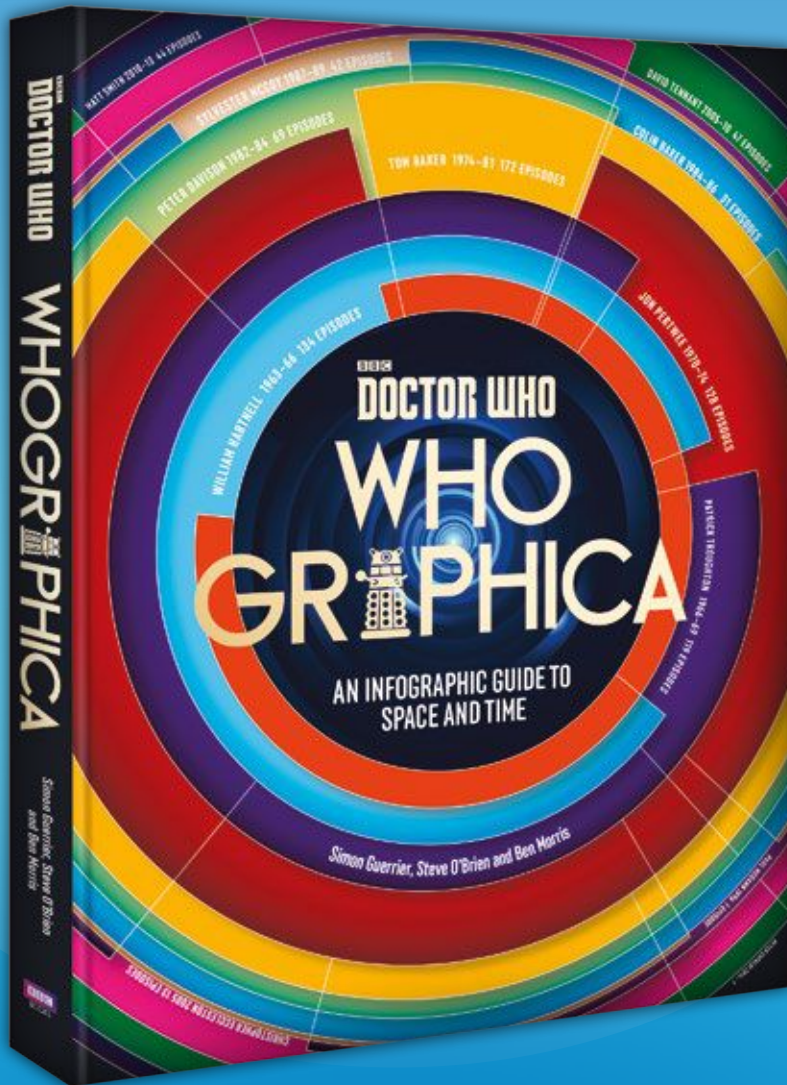
**Class** creator Ness added, "*At last, we can tell you a little more about **Class**! Though there are still many, many secrets to come. Many. Like, a lot. But of COURSE, the Doctor is in Episode One! That's how these things are done. Truly, though, I can't wait for everyone to see the show; we've worked so hard and I'm so proud of it. Soon, soon...*"

We're excited to see how this new corner of the **Doctor Who** world pans out when it premieres this month, on the tenth anniversary of another **Who** spin-off. Speaking of which...



Explore the rich and peculiar history of **Doctor Who**  
through infographics, charts, maps – and more!

A book  
more  
colourful  
than  
Tom  
Baker's  
scarf...



...and  
more  
clever  
than  
Osgood

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# WATCHING DOCTOR WHO

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK  
AT THE WHONIVERSE  
BY JR SOUTHALL



**W**e're used to regeneration now, of course. We take it for granted. So much so that when Steven Moffat makes it a part of the series' storytelling apparatus, we get angry that he isn't reserving it for the proper moments, those moments when the lead character changes from one actor to another.

It wasn't always this way. Imagine sitting in front of your television set on Bonfire Night in 1966, at exactly 5.50pm, and seeing Patrick Troughton sit up and prove that your eyes weren't deceiving you when William Hartnell's Doctor had apparently cross-faded into an entirely different person seven days previously. There was no talk of 'regeneration' back then, of course; producers on the series had been trying to get rid of Hartnell for over a year, fading him to nothing in *The Celestial Toymaker* and plopping his brain into somebody else's head in *The Savages*. Eventually they settled on the most ambiguous option, and simply replaced him with no more explanation than that his body was 'wearing a bit thin.'

And fans think Steven Moffat's writing is perplexing.

We're now approaching the fiftieth anniversary of *Doctor Who*'s most significant moment. Three years ago, we celebrated its beginning, and while there was significant worry in the run up to November 2013 among Old School Fandom that the BBC weren't treating the series with due reverence, the anniversary weekend itself was almost universally reckoned to have been worth the wait. Fewer than eighteen months later, the tenth anniversary of the programme's return came and went with barely a whisper, but the *Doctor Who* universe was still high on the fumes of fifty years since *An Unearthly Child* at the time. Fast forward another eighteen months, and a certain quarter of the series' following has been playing a guessing game about whether missing episode returns might be timed to give five decades of regeneration a proper recognition.

It goes without saying, but it's very unlikely that the fourth instalment of *The Tenth Planet* or the first – or indeed the

whole – of *The Power of the Daleks* will mysteriously but serendipitously turn up just in time for that particular occasion.

*The Power of the Daleks* has an interesting history. Left unnovelised at the end of Target Books' almost comprehensive run of adaptations between 1974 and the end of the 1980s, it finally appeared in novel form in 1993 under the new Virgin imprint. As a story – and an immensely noteworthy one – that had been missing from the BBC's archives that entire time, it had already taken on something of a mystical quality when John Peel's novelisation was published. When, a decade or so later, the BBC experimented with issuing a combination of soundtrack and telesnap reconstruction as part of a fledgling MP3 range for home computers, it was Patrick Troughton's début that was chosen as the test case. That the first foray failed to develop into an ongoing range doesn't appear to have harmed the story's reputation; it may even have enhanced it.



More recently, when Cosgrove Hall animated the two missing episodes of *The Invasion* for BBCi in 2006 – a rather expensive experiment paid for by the BBC's then well-funded interactive service, and which subsequently were issued as part of BBC Worldwide's DVD range – the studio created an animated trailer for a second, entirely missing story that they hoped to sell to the BBC as an animation project in full. The story was, of course, *The Power of the Daleks*, but the project didn't go ahead because, frankly, the cost would have been many times what the budget for a single DVD release could cover.

That doesn't appear to have stanchied the ambitions of Pup Ltd supremo Dan Hall, however, later entrusted with the series' DVD releases and the man who, thanks to an ability to spread the budgets by being independent of the BBC and its strict regulations, finally managed to begin a process of filling in the gaps in black and white *Doctor Who* stories that the purges of the 1970s had left. Starting with *The Reign of Terror*, a successful enough but slightly controversial first attempt, it wasn't long before several more previously partially-missing stories had been completed through cheap but effective animation. Hall's ambition to mount a complete animation of his favourite and entirely missing *Doctor Who* story – you guessed it, *The Power of the Daleks* – ended up thwarted on the back of the budget deficit that the end of the DVD range brought about – *The Underwater Menace* being the other notable casualty of timing.

But the lure of *The Power of the Daleks* has never gone away. Television producer Paul Vanezis even recreated one particular scene for a flashback sequence that was due to appear in 2010's *Victory of the Daleks*, but again fell by the wayside. And finally, a confluence of almost incidental coincidences has come to the story's ultimate rescue.

This November, at precisely 5.50pm on Bonfire Night, the BBC Store will make available for download Episode One of a fully animated *The Power of the Daleks*. It will be followed nightly by the next five instalments, before being made available



elsewhere the following week, broadcast on BBC America on the 12th and released on DVD a week after that.

The Old School will doubtless be fixating on the disc release and asking how on Earth BBC Worldwide have managed to afford six full episodes' worth of animation, when previously they couldn't push the boat out for two on *The Underwater Menace*. The truth is, BBC Worldwide haven't been able to afford it. Some of the money, almost certainly the lion's share, has come from BBC America. And the significant difference is, that's broadcast money.

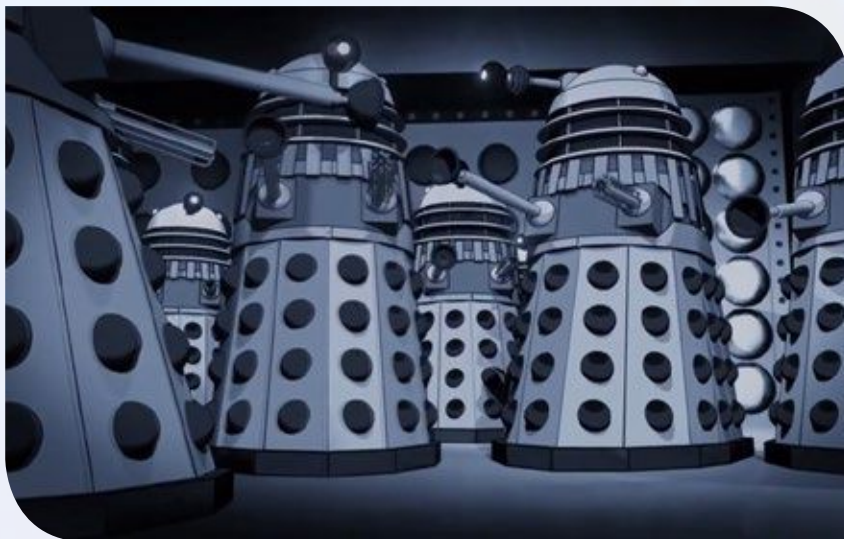
In broadcast terms, a modest six-figure sum (which is what the animation is likely to have cost) can mean as little as a few minutes' worth of television. Whereas for the *Doctor Who* DVD range, the same amount is likely to equal the budget for what several releases would cost. The third factor is the BBC Store; Worldwide might even be anticipating *The Power of the Daleks* as a slight loss-leader, in the hope of attracting people to join up to the Store and maybe stick around and, over time, spend elsewhere. The DVD is, in fact, possibly the least important factor in the equation.

Because BBC America will, in a year in which there will have been only one brand new episode of *Doctor Who* available, have taken stock of the anniversary of the first regeneration, and been glad of an opportunity to celebrate the series' biggest moment in a relatively cheap but hopefully respectful and exciting manner. That this is an animation of an entirely missing story gives them the perfect chance to transmit a story in widescreen and HD, and colour, which wouldn't have been afforded them had the serial been a mix of extant and newly-created footage.

And here's the thing: this isn't the BBC filling in the blanks of a DVD collection decimated by archive purges forty years ago. There will be a black and white edition available for purists, but the crucial thing is that BBC America has filled two hours of television for a fraction of the usual cost, and marked a moment in time in doing so. People who've never seen Patrick Troughton as the Doctor will be watching and enjoying this, and should the original episodes of *The Power of the Daleks* subsequently turn up, the people who turned on the green light won't consider the animation wasted money. This is for here and for now; November 2016. And what's more, it's probably the only opportunity the *Doctor Who* universe will have to recreate the story in this manner – unless this does so exceptionally well it turns everyone's heads enough to want to repeat the experiment – but now that it's done it's there for all of us and for ever.

It won't be what everybody wants. And it's not the same as if the BBC had never thrown those episodes away in the first place.

But back when Dan Hall's plans fell apart, and the MP3 range never took flight, and when Cosgrove Hall's fancies were laughed out of the building, who would have thought that the anniversary of the first regeneration would see its principal story resurrected in quite so surprising and ostentatious a manner?



ARTWORK BY SIMON BRETT





## BECAUSE THE NIGHT (TERRORS)

What is the scariest place in the known universe? As Mark Gatiss, writer of *Night Terrors*, seems keen to point out, it's a child's bedroom! All the more so when that child is a frightened alien with the handy ability to send a message to the Doctor through his trusty psychic paper. **"Please save me from the monsters"**, he begs, and so the interestingly chinned one starts his first and only shift as a social worker of sorts...

The paper also comes in handy in convincing the boy's worried father Alex:

**ALEX: Oh. Right. That was quick.**

**DOCTOR: Was it?**

**ALEX: Claire said she'd phone someone. Social Services.**

**DOCTOR: Yes. Yes.**

**ALEX: It's not easy, you know, admitting your kid's got a problem.**

**DOCTOR: You've got a problem. I've got a problem. I bet they're connected. I'm the Doctor. Call me Doctor.**

It and its handy wallet had been introduced in *The End of the World*, a younger and considerably more Northern Doctor using it as a means of getting himself and Rose VIP seats for the destruction of our humble little planet. Here, though, he's saving a scared child, something the Eleventh incarnation would repeatedly prove himself adept at from his second appearance in *The Beast Below*, his observational skills clearly not deserting him.

**"Crying silently. I mean, children cry because they want attention, because they're hurt or afraid. But when they cry silently, it's because they just can't stop. Any parent knows that."**

Hence Alex's call for help, but George

is no ordinary boy. He's a member of the Tenza, a race known for wanting nothing more than to fit in. His fear of rejection after overhearing a discussion about a proposed adoption is what tips him over the edge, creating the nightmare world





inside his bedroom cupboard in an all-too-literal interpretation of his father's metaphorical advice to put it in there.

In an interesting tangent, the Doctor has already met a more adult patient of sorts menaced by something of a similar hue. Remember the meeting with no less than Van Gogh himself in *Vincent and the Doctor*? Surely as good a study of the often thin line between creativity and depression as any.

The Krafayis may well have been intended by Richard Curtis to represent the 'black dog' hanging over the man who would later be revered as something of a master as he struggles even to sell one measly painting a short while before his suicide at just thirty-seven years of age.

At least two of the Musée d'Orsay visitors viewing his work will spot the hidden representation of his fragile state of mind. Though they're ultimately unable to save him from the demons in his own mind, in a far more sombre narrative than that of the Doctor's visit to that other great French bastion of art, the Louvre, with Romana in tow during *City Of Death*; here Vincent takes a rather final walk down the rue de la mort, as it were.

He certainly manages to live up to the archetype of the struggling artist.

**"One, I pay for my own drinks, thank you. Two, no one ever buys any of my paintings or they would be laughed out of town. So if you want to stay in town, I suggest you keep your cash to yourself. And three, your friend's cute, but you should keep your big nose out of other people's business. Come on, just one more drink. I'll pay tomorrow."**

In common with many sufferers of depression, he proves dismissive of assistance in managing his condition. **"My brother's always sending doctors, but you won't be able to help."**

Only in this case, the monster only



he can see is all too real. It makes him a pariah around Auvers-sur-Oise, many simply choosing to write him off as a madman. Luckily, one with a box is on hand to help, or at least to try as the Doctor notes there may be no chance of ever pulling him out from the mental weight he's under.

**"So you were right. No new paintings. We didn't make a difference at all."**

Young George's story at least finds us able to remember a happier ending as he's accepted into his human family, his fear of the monsters both real to him and

personal to his alien status banished by the man they're said to be scared of. **"Whatever you are, whatever you do, you're my son, and I will never, ever send you away. Oh, George. Oh, my little boy."**

Perhaps the most damaged child he'd ever meet would become his first travelling companion, several years of hurt caused by a quick post-regenerative hop to the moon in the new look sexy TARDIS, mind. The raggedy man helped her to finally grow up upon his return many years after she'd waited for him at the bottom of the garden in Leadworth.

He could be said to be the man with the child in his eyes (to pinch a phrase from Kate Bush) **"Nobody knows about my man. They think he's lost on some horizon."** He's found himself adrift on many in a universal context...

Upon his return, he does at least prove himself **"He's very understanding and so aware of all my situations"**, causing a dilemma for her adult self. **"Oh, I'm so worried about my love..."**

Love that is later given to a woman he first meets as a terrified young girl inside a spacesuit having witnessed her death during his previous self's time spent pointing and laughing at those in her line of work.

To some, he himself is considered a monster, a primal fear that provoked the construction of the Pandorica - an elaborate prison with the specific purpose of saving the universe from him even after all he's done for it since first leaving Gallifrey many moons ago with comparatively little knowledge of the younger generation and a granddaughter in tow; the story of the daft old man with the magic box recounted many years down the line.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY





# REVIEWS

THE LATEST  
DOCTOR WHO  
RELEASES REVIEWED  
AND RATED



## THE HERALDS OF DESTRUCTION #1

WRITER: PAUL CORNELL  
ARTIST: CHRISTOPHER JONES  
PUBLISHER: TITAN COMICS  
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Mike Yates is taking Jo Grant out on a (real) date. The Doctor is showing off to the geriatrics at the Bertram Club.

The Brigadier is mustering his troops to investigate "something enormous and under intelligent control" that has just come down in Bedfordshire. All is right with the world and Jon Pertwee's Third Doctor is back in business in this latest title from Titan, who appear to be determined to issue a Doctor Who comic of some sort every day of the week and twice on Sundays.

Writer/fan favourite Paul Cornell is on record as not being a particular fan of the Earthbound Pertwee era, so it's a relief to report that he's not tried to reinvent the wheel here, he's not tried to turn the Pertwee TV era into something it never was to suit his own tastes. For the most part, this is a pretty accurate recreation of early 1970s Doctor Who, with something extra-terrestrial crash-landing in Middle England and UNIT's five-man army rushing in all guns blazing. As usual, it's hard to get a real handle on the spread of the story from this brisk and lively opening instalment, but Cornell has recreated the show's regulars - and TV irregulars like UNIT second-stringers Corporal Bell and Private Osgood - with effortless ease (and often more successfully than artist Jones whose depictions of Pertwee, Katy Manning

and Co. are often little more than vague resemblances). The story rattles along with the Doctor turning up (in his familiar yellow roadster Bessie) to confront hostile aliens before getting shot in the chest for his sins. Recovering quickly from the low-level blast, he whips up a sonic device to disrupt the control field that holds the aliens together before nabbing a specimen and rushing back to his lab at UNIT HQ to give it the once-over. There he finds a completely unexpected surprise awaiting - and no, we're not about to spoil the delightful final splash panel of this wonderfully and willfully old-fashioned and straightforward comic book romp.

Dotted with nods and references to the clichés of 1970s Who - and with another cameo appearance which will delight long-time fans hidden in its pages - The Heralds of Destruction is a crisp, confident and refreshingly unfussy strip, which evokes its era with charm, wit and a real sense of joy. Roll on issue two.

PAUL MOUNT

★★★★★★★★★ 8



## DOCTOR WHO PHILIP HINCHCLIFFE PRESENTS VOLUME 2: THE GENESIS CHAMBER

DIRECTOR: KEN BENTLEY / WRITER: PHILIP HINCHCLIFFE, MARC PLATT / STARRING: TOM BAKER, LOUISE JAMESON, JON CULSHAW, HANNAH GENESIOUS, JEMMA CHURCHILL, DAN LI, VERNON DOBTSHEFF, ARTHUR HUGHES, GYURI SAROSSY, ELLIOT CHAPMAN / PUBLISHER: BIG FINISH / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The Genesis Chamber is an example of producer Philip Hinchcliffe being let loose on his own thematic predilections, without the sardonicism of script editor Robert Holmes to ground him in humanity's darker inclinations. This is basically an expansion

of The Face of Evil, with the mordancy of Chris Boucher replaced instead by the more optimistic themes of Hinchcliffe's replacement. Hinchcliffe once spoke of how his own Season 15 might have included a variation on King Solomon's Mines - a story that has already been adapted by Big Finish as The Valley of Death - and here we have an alternative reading set in the post-Star Wars sci-fi landscape.

This second Philip Hinchcliffe Presents takes place on the colony planet Terra Nuevo. The Doctor and Leela find a world divided into two conflicting factions, the Mummerset-accented villagers who shun all technology, and the Inscape-worshipping city dwellers who themselves are split along political lines reminiscent of those dividing France back in 1572. But our regulars aren't the first strangers to arrive, and the improbably handsome Volor is showing a particular interest in the city's controlling artificial intelligence...

Hinchcliffe's biggest deviation from mid-1970s Doctor Who is the underpinning Romeo and Juliet storyline, balanced by a similar plot thread for Leela that prefigures her eventual departure in The Invasion of Time. There's scant evidence of the Pygmalion influence that Holmes and Boucher brought to the character, freeing Louise Jameson up to give Leela a touch more independence. That the star-crossed

lovers plot plays out exactly as you'd predict also allows Hinchcliffe's co-writer Marc Platt to use the six episodes to their best advantage, fashioning something a little more complex and cinematic than audio can usually accommodate. It's a brave gambit that entirely works - and feels very much of its time, Ana and Showna a proto Luke and Leia and Jon Culshaw giving his best James Earl Jones as the chief villain.

Producer David Richardson and director Ken Bentley have pulled out all the stops, a fine cast and sound design going beyond even the usual quality you'd expect from Big Finish. And Tom Baker sounds more like his 1977 self than ever; Marc Platt might not have his antecedent Robert Holmes' causticism, but as Ghost Light demonstrated, he's very much at home in this era and his reading of the Fourth Doctor is exemplary. This is very much the missing link between the derivative horrors of Season 14 and the Graham Williams producership that replaced them, and as such it doesn't fit quite neatly into either period. Instead, The Genesis Chamber presents us with something new out of something old, and you couldn't ask for more than that.

Extras: 70 minutes behind the scenes

JR SOUTHALL

★★★★★★★★★ 9



JULIAN WADHAM AND OLIVIA POULET IN



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LIVVY BOOTE is...

# THE GIRL FROM X PLANET X

**S**ometimes you just want to watch something that doesn't require too much effort. Netflix is the best place to go for this sort of thing - but that's not to say that its binge-worthy content isn't also interesting and thought-provoking. That being said, sifting through all the rubbish on Netflix in an attempt to find something new and actually *good* can be hard. It's especially hard, of course, to find stuff that has good female leads.

I've therefore compiled a list of my favourite Netflix shows and movies for those who share this struggle. They all have either female leads or a strong feminist theme running throughout them. They're enjoyable, easy to marathon, and excellent quality.

## + 1 - STRANGER THINGS

Let's start with the show that blew viewers away this summer - *Stranger Things*. Our young main characters, Lucas, Dustin, and Mike, discover that their friend has gone missing. After meeting a mysterious girl who has psychic abilities and calls herself 011 (nicknamed El), they begin their search for their lost friend. El is a wonderfully complex character - having run away from an institute that performed scientific experiments on her, she makes new friends who show her what it means to be a normal kid. It's both a heart-warming and unsettling show, heavily inspired by Stephen King, which makes it a must watch.

## + 2 - ATTACK ON TITAN

Unlike a lot of anime, *Attack on Titan* (aka *Shingeki no Kyojin*) has well-rounded, convincing female characters. In a world where titans rule and the human race cowers behind giant walls, soldiers are trying their best to protect their people and learn what they can about the fearsome titans. The most talented soldier of her age group is Mikasa, a kick-ass Asian main character who for once isn't hyper-sexualised. If you want to watch an action series that *isn't* ridiculously misogynistic, *Attack on Titan* is the show for you.

## + 3 - STAR TREK

When *Star Trek* debuted in 1966, it brought to the screens an image of black women working alongside men. Nowadays it certainly seems dated, but that doesn't make it any less inspirational. Even now, *The Original Series* still entertains us and gives us a hopeful insight to the future of the human race - where people can work together to explore the universe, regardless of their gender, race, or skin colour. And guess what? *All* of the series are on Netflix.

## + 4 - ORPHAN BLACK

*Orphan Black* doesn't seem to get the credit it deserves. It's a fast-paced, thought-provoking drama centred on one female character - who happens to be one of many clones. Each clone has a different personality, not only displaying a wonderful variety of female characters but also showcasing Tatiana Maslany's



She may be small, but you don't mess with El.

talent as an actor. It's refreshing to watch an exciting sci-fi show that has a cast almost exclusively female. It's definitely one of the best shows out there at the moment, so if you're prepared for major plot twists and complicated genetics jargon, give it a go.

## + 5 - JESSICA JONES

*Jessica Jones* revolutionised what it means to be a superhero. This series is dark, gritty, funny, and surprising. Some may be put off by the main role being a woman - these people are morons. Good plot lines and gory fight scenes aren't exclusive to male superhero shows. Jessica, a woman with super-strength, is a private detective who gets dragged into trouble with the terrifying Kilgrave, a man who abuses his powers of mind control to force people to do what he wants. This creates a fascinating dynamic between protagonist and antagonist, making Jessica very much a superhero for women - proving that you can escape your abusers. Regardless of your gender, you should watch this show. It's challenging, frightening and a non-stop adrenaline rush.

## + 6 - SENSE8

Transgender? Person of colour? LGBT? Woman? Well, Netflix has just the show for you. The great thing about *Sense8* is that it really is a show for anybody - it's quite remarkable, and unlike anything else out there. A Netflix original series, *Sense8* tells us of a world where a handful of people each generation are mentally connected. Unaware of this connection for most of their lives, each character



Just a few of the many clones in Orphan Black.



## NETFLIX IS A PRETTY MIXED BAG, BUT THERE ARE SOME BRILLIANT FEMINIST THINGS OUT THERE FOR YOU TO FIND...

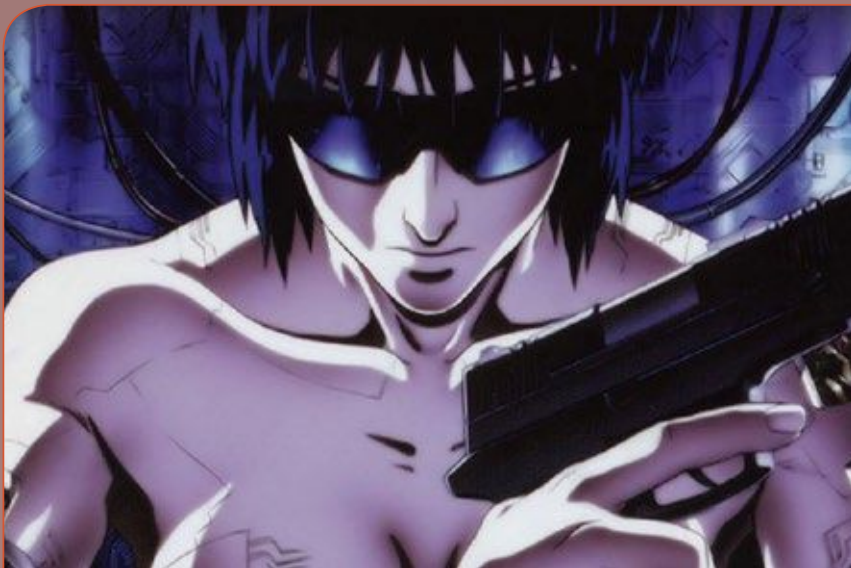
desperately tries to find safety from authorities whilst figuring out what's actually happening to them. With no one they can trust and little understanding of their powers, the connection only strengthens and they slowly begin to get to know each other. Excellent female characters, excellent storyline.

### + 7 - THE BABADOOK

Horror movies can be horrifically sexist. However, *The Babadook* defies the stereotypes forced on women within the genre. This absolutely *terrifying* movie follows the main character's struggle with PTSD and depression whilst trying to be a mother. The monster of the movie is essentially a physical manifestation of her mental illness, and as the film goes on we see how much damage it does to herself and her whole family. A horror movie about the trials of motherhood and mental illness, produced by women, this is a feminist classic for everyone.

### + 8 - GHOST IN THE SHELL

As I've said, anime can be one of the worst genres when it comes to sexism. Female characters with huge, watermelon breasts running around are pretty common. But *Ghost in the Shell* is an excellent example of where anime does well in this respect. Set in a cyberpunk future, our main character, Major Motoko Kusanagi, is a cyborg who must track down the notorious hacker The Puppet Master. As someone who is part machine, she must avoid being



Major Kusanagi from Ghost in the Shell.

hacked herself. If this isn't an action-packed movie about a woman's fight for her identity, I don't know what is.

### + 9 - ONCE UPON A TIME

This show may seem a bit silly - and it's true, it is. But it's also great fun, and takes a really interesting perspective on fairy tales. Filled with exciting twists and turns and surprising family trees, *Once Upon A Time* provides some of the best range of

female characters of any show. Fairy tales were often told as lessons to little girls not to talk to the strange man, not to wander off, not to fall in love with the wrong boy. The show maintains this focus on women, showing how much power women can have individually or in a group working together. Very easy to marathon, very satisfying to watch, and pretty much every character in it is beautiful to look at, which is a bonus.

### + 10 - AMERICAN HORROR STORY

Another example of feminist horror, *American Horror Story* is the only thing on the screens that genuinely scares me. Yes, really, it's that scary. Take some classic horror tropes and twist them, incorporate them into real life situations, throw in some excellent acting and an enormous range of female characters, and there you have it - *American Horror Story*. It's a series that shows us the worst mankind can be. Demons might crawl in and ghosts might haunt, but at the end of the day, the cause of all evil is humanity. More specifically, men. If you haven't watched this, you really need to get on it - every season has a different storyline, different characters, and different horrors to leave you lying awake at night.

Many reading this may have seen all of these already, but not everyone has the luck of finding the good stuff on Netflix. So, for those of you who are new to some of these suggestions - happy marathoning!



Regina from Once Upon A Time: Queen of incredible outfits



# FINDING CRITTERS

by Michael Coldwell

It's been a few years since our cinema screens had some wizard goings-on, but that's about to change as we herald **FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM...**

In 2011, the massively successful Harry Potter movie franchise finally reached its epic conclusion with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*. The release was accompanied by much gnashing of teeth from the Potterati; this was, after all, the end of the literary line for Harry and friends; there would be no more Christmas trips to the multiplex for that much-cherished yearly immersion in J. K. Rowling's beloved Wizarding World™. This sobering fact was certainly not lost on the suits at Warner

Brothers, who had seen their coffers magically swell to the tune of £8 billion since 2001, courtesy of the bespectacled marvel and his mates. Surely the Hogwarts Express gravy train hadn't really hit the buffers?

No prizes for guessing the answer to that one. If the current splurge of DC Universe movies proves anything, it's that Warners are not shy and retiring types when it comes to making hay while the sun shines. While fans of the Potter series took solace in the conversion of the Leavesden Studios sets into a hugely successful and lucrative interactive tour of Hogwarts and other locations, secret plans were already being hatched behind the scenes that would result in the expansion of Rowling's fictional universe in new and unexpected ways.

The first in a planned trilogy of new movies, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* has its origins in Rowling's delightfully compact 2001-penned digest of eighty-five dangerous creatures and their habitats. Written in the guise of intrepid monster hunter Newt Scamander and first referenced in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the book was a realisation of a fictional textbook issued to all First Year Hogwarts students. Purporting to now be in its fifty-second printing since publication in 1927, it had an introduction from Hogwarts



Headmaster Albus Dumbledore that explained its release into the wider world to be a tie-in with the (real) Comic Relief charity, with all proceeds going to worthy causes.

So far, so nice; a little spin-off to the main event. Anyone who enjoyed this slim volume might therefore have been a tad alarmed to learn that those scant 128 pages were due to be turned into a hulking great three-movie franchise. The portents were not good; despite making nearly \$3 billion for the studio, Warners' decision to split the 300 pages of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* into three very, very (very) long movies was widely





regarded as a misguided cash grab that was squeezing the life out of a mighty franchise. With the once magical annual trip to Middle Earth now about as welcome as a wintery appointment with the proctologist, was the same painful fate about to befall the Potterverse?

Mugglesome fears quickly turned to joy with the news that J. K. Rowling herself would be making her screenwriting début with this new trilogy and that, far from doing a straight adaptation of the original book (which, let's face it, would have been high on impossible), she was in the process of wizarding up a brand new story based on the adventures of the book's fictional author, Newt Scamander. You see, nothing to worry about.

So what do we know about this new spin-off trilogy's story to get our collective wands twitching? Well, for one very important thing, it's not set in or around Hogwarts School in the time of Harry and his chums. Instead, we find ourselves in a new but no less fervent hotbed of wizardous goings-on: New York City, 1926. Just to reinforce that this isn't a version of the original book, we first encounter our hero Newt Scamander (Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne) at the point where he has completed his epic quest to find and transcribe the most unusual creatures of the globe. Now heading for a creature-centric meeting with the Magical Congress of the United

States of America (MACUSA), he brings with him a rather clever sort of briefcase that, in typical Rowling style, actually contains a whole host of incredibly bizarre animals that, should they ever escape, would give responsible wizarding

a serious PR problem. We don't think it's giving anything away to let the beast out of the bag here: escape some of them do, serving up a whole load of trouble for Scamander. Be a bit of a boring movie otherwise, wouldn't it?







In casting terms, *Fantastic Beasts* (we'll just call it that) already looks like a winner. The news that Eddie Redmayne had been cast as Newt Scamander sent an audible purr of sage agreement around fan and film communities alike, particularly from those who still debate the relative merits of Daniel Radcliffe's performance. No such worries here; via his multi award-winning turns in *The Theory of Everything* and *The Danish Girl*, audiences were already familiar with Redmayne's remarkable versatility and screen presence. If what we've seen is anything to go by, there's something just inherently 'right' in the way Redmayne brandishes a wand about in this universe - you sort of assume he's always been there. As it is, we're looking

forward to seeing what he does with a character we've been told was "*kicked out of Hogwarts for endangering human life... with a beast!*" Our kind of guy!

Echoing the Potter series, Newt does not fight the forces of evil alone but as part of a brave and resourceful team. Katherine Waterston plays the role of Porpentina 'Tina' Goldstein, a courageous young witch employed at MACUSA in a menial job despite being capable of far greater things. We have no doubt she'll get the chance to prove it, too. Alongside them are Porpentina's blonde-bombshell sister Queenie, played by Alison Sudol in her feature film debut and Dan Fogler as Jake Kowalski, a No-Maj (American word for 'Muggle') factory worker and wannabe baker who tumbles head-first into the secret world Newt inhabits and ends up joining the team. Expect the core themes of love, death, and friendship that increasingly defined the original Potter series to loom just as large here, as these four outsiders come together in a desperate battle to prevent the dying of the magical light.

Also on board in the role of Percival Graves is Colin Farrell, whose stock as a character actor is on the rise following strong turns in *Saving Mr. Banks* and the excellently odd science fiction movie *The Lobster*. As the MACUSA security chief charged with keeping wizards safe,

Graves has his work cut out trying to track down and protect Newt Scamander and his friends.

The villains of the piece are the sinister New Salem Philanthropic Society (or 'NSPS' - there will be a test at the end, by the way). You won't be surprised to learn that what we have here is a right bunch of No-Maj killjoys dedicated to wiping every single witch and wizard from the face of the earth. They are led by the frankly unhinged Mary Lou, played with relish by Samantha Morton. In the film, we witness the Society picketing a rally for supporters of Senator Henry Shaw Jr, portrayed by veteran actor Jon Voight (*Deliverance*, Angelina's dad, don't get him started on politics). But let's not take this shallow bunch at face value; if the rumors we're hearing are true, the war they wage with Newt Scamander may be far more intriguing than plain old humans vs. wizards...

After *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* director Alfonso Cuarón reportedly turned down the gig, it came as no surprise to anyone when David Yates was announced as the helmsman for the first of this new trilogy. Widely regarded as definitely the second best Potter director, Yates' handling of the last four of the movie series won him plaudits and led to a rather interesting period where he was said to be working with







BBC Worldwide on a movie version of *Doctor Who*, a rumour that entertainingly wound up current *Who* showrunner Steven Moffat into a fulminating lather of carefully-worded denial and exasperation. Neatly side-stepping that cherry bomb, Yates then directed the epic but misfiring Tarzan reboot *The Legend of Tarzan* (released in 2016) before starting on *Fantastic Beasts*, finally stepping back into the fictional world that visibly came of age under his tutelage.

With Yates back in 'the chair' under the wing of long-time Potter producer David Heyman, principle production on *Fantastic Beasts* kicked off in August 2015 at the series' traditional home of Warner Bros. studios in Leavesden. Location filming was achieved without the need to decamp for the USA; suitably dressed outdoor sets in both London and Liverpool were utilised, the architecture of the Merseyside city's imposing St George's Hall proving a particularly convincing match for the

Gothic facades of 1920s New York. Snowbound streets, vintage cars and massed ranks of costumed extras all added to the unique atmosphere and filming proceeded smoothly, the production even achieving the rare accolade of departing Liverpool with the same number of expensive vehicles it arrived with.

With the waiting almost over until *Fantastic Beasts*' November 18th release, it's fair to say expectations are on the high side. Excitement was stoked into overdrive in July when the cast and crew put in an appearance at the mammoth and frankly rather scary San Diego Comic-Con. After sending the thousands of acolytes before him into rapturous convulsions with his magic wand, Eddie Redmayne topped all that by giving every single fan present a wand of their very own. Cheap tricks get 'em every time. This was also the occasion to unveil a new trailer that strongly suggests the movie will be full to the brim with the joie de vivre of the earlier Potter series while feasting on an explosion of new goodies, baddies and – most importantly – beasties.

Rowling has described *Fantastic Beasts* as neither a prequel nor a sequel but set in the same universe. Of that we have no doubt; the footage resounds with connectivity, both literal and stylistic, with the previous movies while at the same time revealing a brand new dimension to a much-loved world.

But will this just be Harry Potter goes to New York? Some are bound to see it that way, but from what we've seen so far, Newt Scamander and friends will be a new and refreshingly upbeat bunch compared



to the increasingly sullen trio of teenagers we said goodbye to in 2011.

With the rest of this new trilogy due in 2018 and 2020, that's a few more years on the clock for Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, and Emily Watson before the inevitable day when they step back into their signature roles for the multi-part movie adaptation of the current smash-hit stage show *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. And if you think that's not happening you might want check you haven't had a Bedazzling Hex put upon you. Either that or your crystal ball needs new batteries. And not those Poundland ones, either, they're a false economy.

For Warners, *Fantastic Beasts* represents the beginning of a new phase and they too will expect it to hit big this November. Make that very big. Careful stewardship has been a hallmark of the franchise since its launch back in 2001 and in that respect not much has changed. By keeping Rowling on board in an expanded creative capacity and by retaining the services of many of the key production staff from the original movie series, they know they already have a massive and loyal audience just waiting to lap this up. You'd be a brave soul to bet against *Fantastic Beasts* casting a giant spell on the box office but, if you're still on the fence, we've saved the clincher till last: it's also got Ron Perlman in it.

See you at the popcorn stand. We'll have the giant salty. And a Fanta.

**FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM** magically appears in cinemas on November 18th.





# EVEN STRANGER THINGS

By Ed Fortune

THE DEMOGORGON

EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE NEW SHOW HAS BROUGHT THE CLASSIC ROLE PLAYING GAME BACK INTO THE PUBLIC EYE, SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE CREATURES FROM THAT REALM THAT THE SERIES HAS BROUGHT TO THE FORE AND WHAT WE MIGHT SEE NEXT...

**H**it Netflix TV series *Stranger Things* is pretty much defined by its '80s setting. The show is evocative of movies from that time. It even has specific shout outs to *ET: The Extra Terrestrial*, *The Goonies*, *The Evil Dead* and almost everything Stephen King did back then. But one of its biggest influences is classic fantasy game *Dungeons and Dragons*. The show begins at the gaming table, with a band of nerdy kids playing *D&D*. The mutual respect and teamwork that the game instils in the show's heroes also sees them through some pretty dark times.

*Stranger Things* opens with Mike, Dustin, Lucas, and Will taking on one of *D&D*'s signature extra-dimensional horrors, a hell prince known as the Demogorgon. The show then takes those kids on a journey in which they face far worse things, including a land of horrors called the Upside Down. But it's deeper than that. Let's examine it more closely.

## THE DEMOGORGON

We may as well start with the monster of the moment, the Demogorgon. In the real world, Demogorgon is a mistranslation of the word demiurge, which means god-like. In *Stranger Things*, it's the name given to the big bad horror, but its *D&D* counterpart has an equally interesting history. It's one of the earliest additions to the game, and the Demogorgon is meant to be bad news. The Demogorgon appears as an 18-foot-tall, reptilian, sexless demon-thing with two mandrill (or hyena) heads attached to twin snake-like necks. Its arms are tentacles, its legs are dragon-like and the creature has a forked tail. The Demogorgon is completely insane, has a separate personality for each head (both are utterly evil) and can control minds. Oh, and its touch causes rot and decay in any living thing. It lives in a plane of hell known as the Abyss, specifically near a place called the Gaping Maw. This is a vast, mist covered land made of shadow and dark seas filled with rocky fortresses and

tentacled horrors. Given that, it's easy to see where the show's Upside Down comes from.

## PSIONICS

In *D&D*, mind powers are separate from magic and are called psionics. They're rare yet incredibly powerful, and yes, they do stuff like locating things and moving objects around. In *Stranger Things*, Eleven's abilities are very close to the sort of thing a powerful psionicist could achieve.

The Demogorgon is a master of them. Interestingly, everything mentioned in this article has some connection to psionic powers, even the weird planes. Which brings us to the next point...

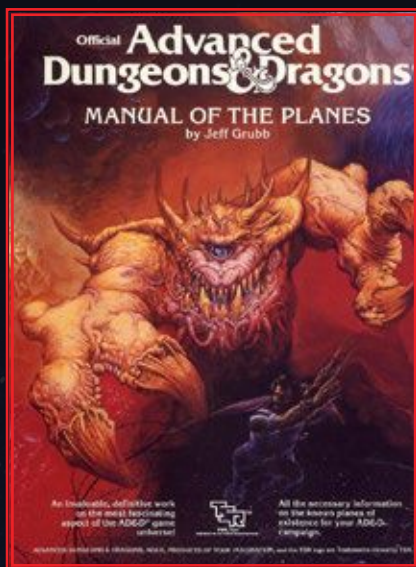
## THE SHADOWFELL AND THE SUNSET WORLD

In the show, the kids pull open a ring binder and page through an expert edition of *D&D* to find a chapter on a place called the Vale of Shadows. This is a pretty common name for a 'creepy place' in the game, but not actually another dimension. The Upside Down actually sounds more like the Plane of Shadows.

*Dungeons and Dragons* has a complex cosmology. There's an entire book called the Manual of the Planes and a whole setting (Planescape) that handles it all. In the '80s, much of the setting was still being written. The Plane of Shadows (renamed to Shadowfell in later editions) is one of the earliest

THE UPSIDE DOWN





setting elements, and was certainly around in the '80s. Usually, it's no easy feat for characters to leave one reality and enter another, but it is possible. One of the easiest places to get to is the Plane of Shadow. All you need is the right magic (or the wrong monster) and a patch of darkness. The plane lies right next to ours, just like in the show.

Another source of inspiration is almost certainly the Sunset World. This started out in *D&D* periodical *Dragon Magazine*, but formed a backbone of some of the creepier parts of the game's mythos. The Sunset World is a land in which the sun has died. Creatures have come and eaten away the sun, so it lurks in permanent shadow. The land looks much like ours, but perhaps from the future as everything is decayed. No human lives here; instead, it is ruled by aberrant monsters known as mind flayers. Which brings us to our next horror.

**THE ITHILLID ALSO KNOWN AS THE MIND FLAYER**  
These incredibly tall and strong horrors are one of *D&D*'s most striking monsters. They are a fleshy purple colour, with a dome-like head that ends in a tentacled

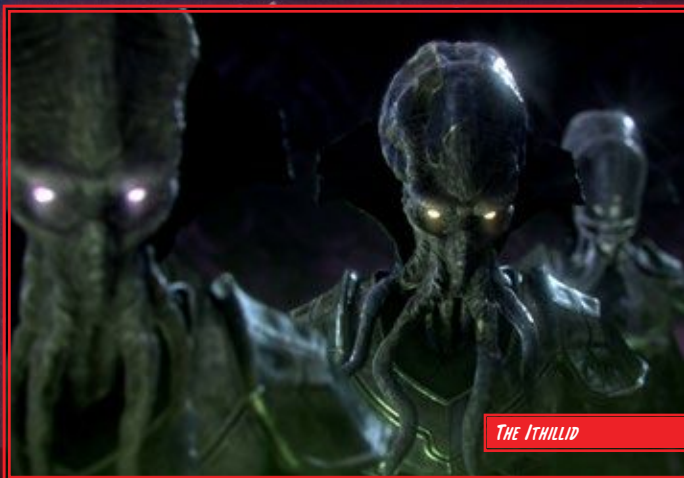
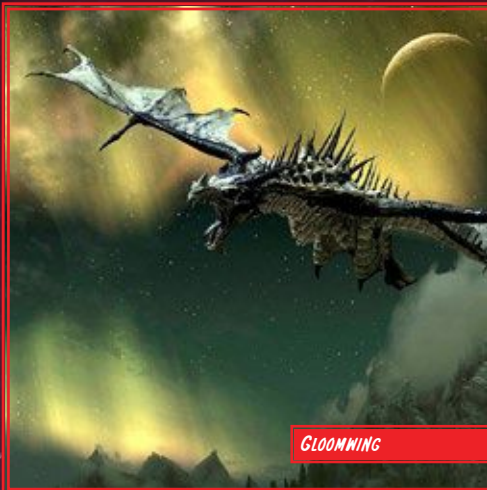
maw. Imposing in form, they look utterly alien and are hard to hit due to being so fast. Sound familiar? Mind flayers are one the earliest horrors introduced to the game and are typically a game-ending creature. They have their own set of psionic powers and eat brains. They actually kidnap people (typically by blasting their minds with their powers) and then crack open the skull with their gaping maws of teeth. Once they've slurped out the brain matter, they implant their young in the victim. Mind flayers are just the start, though; there is an entire sub-type of tentacle-wielding, brain-eating horrors, called Ithillidae. These belong to a larger category of creature called Aberration, of which the Demogorgon holds some sway.

### WORMS AND MOTHS

Mind you, *Dungeons and Dragons* has plenty of brain-eating, egg-implanting monstrosities. Fans of China Miéville's novel *Perdido Street Station* may be amused to learn that the game has a mind-altering, drug-producing horror moth called a Gloomwing. This beastie produces hallucinations through a thick dust and lays long maggotty things into its victims. These larvae are called Tenebrous Worms, and their natural habitat is the Plane of Shadows. The front section of the worm is covered with lusterless black bristles, and the whole thing is a slimy grey. Again, another key inspiration for some of the horrors in *Stranger Things*.

### THE THESSALHYDRA

Another '80s *D&D* monster, the Thessalhydra appears in the boys' game as well. Much like the Demogorgon earlier in the story, it's very likely it foreshadows future events. The Thessalhydra is an eight-headed abomination. The heads form a ring around a large, circular mouth rimmed with jagged teeth, and they grab and drag creatures into the horrid mouth. The tail has pincers for grabbing people, and the whole thing drools acid. What the eight heads of the Thessalhydra will be in *Stranger Things* is a mystery that we'll have to wait for Season Two to resolve.







# SUBSPACE RELAY

ALL THE NEWS  
FROM THE  
WORLDS OF  
STAR TREK  
WITH IAIN  
ROBERTSON



## MAC Makeup

We don't have space to mention a lot of **Trek** merchandise in these pages (for example, there are some very cool Bluetooth communicators we've tried and failed to fit in for months), but we're making an exception here as MAC's range of **Star Trek** cosmetics has caused quite a stir. Not only has it been a big hit at conventions (partly due to MAC going all out with some very impressive promotion), it's also one of the few ranges of merchandise that – shock horror – acknowledges that women are into this stuff too.

Not being the make-up wearing types ourselves – no matter how much we'd benefit from it – we roped in top **Trek** Bloggers The Trekkie Girls (find them on Twitter: @TrekkieGirls) to give us the lowdown:

*"Star Trek merchandise is big business. Ferengi would get tingly ears if they had customers like our fan base! That said, not everyone is into 'collectables'. That's why we were more excited than Tribbles in a tank of quadrottricale when we heard that MAC Cosmetics were releasing a Star Trek-themed makeup range. When purchasing Star Trek merchandise, we like to choose items that express our fandom, but are also useful or beautiful. This ticks all three of those boxes."*

*"We were fortunate enough to get our hands on it early at the Star Trek Las Vegas convention. One of MAC's senior artists explained how MAC's ethos was very much in line with that of Star Trek, emphasising equality and appealing to all ages, genders and races. The range features four 'looks' including Seven of Nine, Vina, Deanna Troi, and Uhura. Whilst each look pays tribute to a defining feature of each character, they also work well by themselves or mixed up."*

*"Our absolute favourite item is the Trip the Light powder named 'Luna Lustre', which is a discreet rose gold with plenty of shine. We've been using it as a shimmery highlighter on our cheekbones."*

*"The lipsticks and lipglasses are surprisingly wearable. We say surprisingly because the gold 'Pleasure Planet' and silver 'Set to Stun' aren't colours we would normally consider wearing ourselves. That is, until we tried them. They are actually quite subtle by themselves or can be more dramatic when added with one of the lipsticks. The lipglass 'Warp Speed Ahead' is a deep purple with blue flecks and goes well with the Lipstick 'Kling-it-on' – in fact we think it will be all the rage on the front row this Autumn at Qo'noS fashion week."*

*"Khaaaannnnn' is our favourite lipglass. It's a berry/red colour with lots of shimmer. It's like a disco on your lips. (Disco also being the nickname for the new Star Trek series – Starship USS DISCOVERY!)"*

## Discovering DISCOVERY Will Take a While Longer

Should you be one of the regular readers of this column, you may recall how last month's **Star Trek: Discovery** update signed off with the words 'is it January yet?' We no longer care about January, however, as a mere two days before our last issue hit the shelves, CBS announced that the launch of the series had been delayed until May.

Now, we'll happily take their word that they haven't just done this in order to make us look silly, so here's the official explanation from executive producers Bryan Fuller and Alex Kurtzman:

*"Bringing Star Trek back to television carries a responsibility and mission: to connect fans and newcomers alike to the series that has fed our imaginations since childhood. We aim to dream big and deliver, and that means making sure the demands of physical and post-production for a show that takes place entirely in space, and the need to meet an air date, don't result in compromised quality. Before heading into production, we evaluated these realities with our partners at CBS and they agreed: Star Trek deserves the very best, and these extra few months will help us achieve a vision we can all be proud of."*

The day after the announcement was made, CBS President Les Moonves offered some further details:

*"We've delayed our Star Trek [launch] until May. For those who think that's something to be worried about, let me assure you: it's not. The producers came into my office last week and begged me – we are creating an entire universe; you know how fanatical Star Trek fans are. We're creating this universe, we need a couple more months to get the effects right, to get the world right. Please let us have until May."*

*"With Star Trek, which is the family jewels, I'd rather it be a few months late – and great – than early, and not great. Because we will suffer for it. So we made the decision to give them the time to make their perfect Star Trek, which we are wildly anticipating."*

Whilst on the one hand, the series hitting delays before production has even started (it's due to start shooting in early November) is worrying, the fact that CBS are happy to delay the series to accommodate creative demands is a good sign. Previous series, most recently **Enterprise**, haven't had the full backing of the studio, and have suffered as a result. It's also pleasing to see they're not determined to rush it into production despite behind-the-scenes problems in order to meet a pre-determined release date, as Paramount recently did with the fun-but-flawed **Star Trek Beyond**.

It's not the first time Bryan Fuller's fought to delay a series to give his team more time to get it right. The same thing happened on the final season of **Hannibal** that, lest we forget, turned out pretty damn great.

While we may have to wait a little longer for the series, Fuller's keeping us ticking over with occasional titbits, including the reassuring news that one of the best episodes of the Original Series is going to be a major influence on the new series.

On September 8th – the series' 50th anniversary – Bryan Fuller announced that "A favourite TOS episode, 'Balance Of Terror' is a touchstone for the **Star Trek: Discovery** story arc".

The classic 1966 episode introduced the Romulans into **Trek**, and saw the Enterprise engaged in a tense game of cat and mouse with a Bird-of-Prey, commanded by Mark Lenard (who would of course go on to play Spock's father, Sarek).

What this means for the series is anyone's guess. It's unlikely that the '10 years prior to the Original Series' event that Fuller's referred to previously relates to this episode. Other than the Romulan war (which Fuller's already discounted and is mentioned in *Balance Of Terror* as occurring a century earlier), there are no real references to prior events. It also established that the Federation had never come face-to-face with the Romulans prior to that



episode, meaning using them as a recurring adversary in **Discovery** would be problematic.

It's more likely that Fuller's referring to the tone of the episode. Besides being one of **Trek's** tensest instalments, it was one of the first episodes to humanise (for want of a better word) the so-called villains, showing the episode as much from the Romulan Commander's point-of-view as Kirk's.

Whatever Fuller meant, *Balance Of Terror* is one of **Trek's** great episodes, and if it's a major influence on *Discovery* in any way, it's a very good sign that things are on the right track.

## Can TREK Trump Trump?

**Trek** alumni have a long history of activism for assorted good causes, but an unprecedented number have recently signed up to protest against Donald Trump's presidential bid. The campaign – **Trek Against Trump** – was organised by Quark actor Armin Shimerman, and is endorsed by over 100 actors, writers, producers and others involved in the franchise. These include Bryan Fuller, J. J. Abrams, Rick Berman, George Takei, Jonathan Frakes, Marina Sirtis, Brent Spiner, Kate Mulgrew, Scott Bakula, Jeri Ryan, Simon Pegg, and Eugene Roddenberry.

"We cannot turn our backs on what is happening in the upcoming election" reads the campaign's official Facebook page. "Never has there been a presidential candidate who stands in such complete opposition to the ideals of the **Star Trek** universe as Donald Trump. His election would take this country backward, perhaps disastrously. We need to elect a president who will move this country forward into the kind of future we all dream of: where personal differences are understood and accepted, where science overrules superstition, where people work together instead of against each other."

The campaign's running on both Twitter and Facebook, and more **Trek** alumni are adding their names all the time. Wouldn't it be brilliant if a campaign organised by a Ferengi helped stopped the greedy, orange-skinned one reaching the White House?

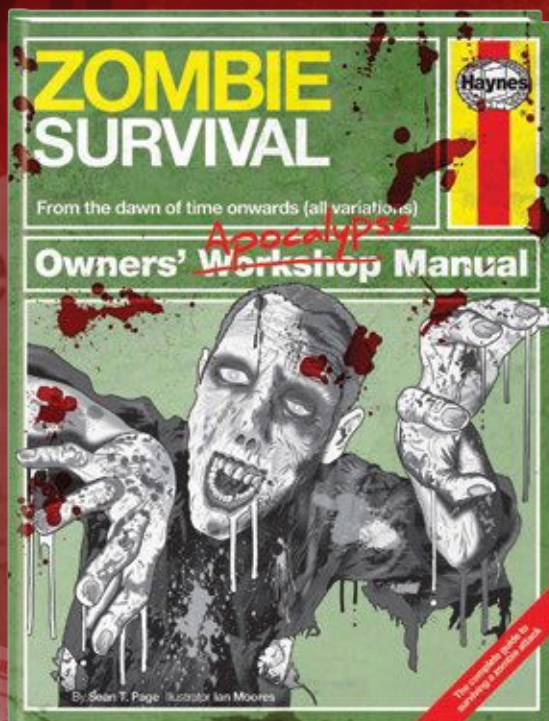
## Encyclopedia Update

First published in 1999, the **Star Trek Encyclopedia** is one of the definitive reference books on the series, and now it's had a massive update. Written by **Trek** gurus Mike and Denise Okuda, the original was one of the most comprehensive guides to the **Trek** universe ever compiled. The new version – now expanded to two volumes – has an additional 300 pages. Besides being fully revised and expanded throughout, it covers the entire output made since the original was released – namely the second half of **Voyager**, **Enterprise**, the most recent four movies and the remastered Original Series and **Next Generation**. Although the likes of online resources such as **Memory Alpha** may offer a level of detail even a book as comprehensive as this one may struggle to match, the encyclopedia has the advantage of insider knowledge. With the exception of the current movie series, the Okudas have worked on every onscreen incarnation of **Trek** since the mid-'80s, and know more about the show than any well-balanced person has any right to. Plus it comes with many exclusive photos and artwork detailing the whole of **Trek's** 50-year history. In short, it's indispensable for any fan and available now for a slightly pricey RRP of £100. And if anyone wants to send us a complementary copy for review, we'd be eternally grateful [stop trying to blag freebies – Ed].

## TREK Hits Birmingham

Considering many of its residents act like they haven't discovered fire or the wheel yet, it's quite surprising that Birmingham has recently been the focus of two high profile sci-fi events. Firstly, a certain Steven Spielberg has been filming **Ready Player One** in the city, bringing a much-needed touch of Hollywood glamour to the West Midlands. Secondly, **Trek** took over the NEC in early October for the largest 50th anniversary convention outside of the U.S. – **Destination Star Trek**. Besides the presence of the legendary William Shatner (including the UK premiere of his one-man show, *Shatner's World*), there were actors and personnel representing every **Trek** series. As they inconveniently held it too late for this month, we'll have more details in the next issue.

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# THE TREKOLOGIST

From the  
desk of the  
STARBURST  
Trekologist  
B. JONES



## The Mirror Universe - a dark reflection on the Trek storyline...

**G**reetings from the hub of Trekdome. Let's have a look at episodes on CBS Action this month, where you can watch **Star Trek** every day. Currently running are episodes of second season original **Star Trek** and fourth season **Deep Space Nine**.

There are eight superb instalments in the mirror universe saga and two of them can be caught this month. If you have never seen one of these then you are in for a treat. These episodes play with timelines, characters and events and put a dark sexy swing on all that we are used to. Even the costumes and insignia get a revision. The ISS Enterprise belongs to a fleet in the Terran Empire whose symbol is a planet with a sword through it - a logo that says 'Don't mess with us matey!'

The first of these episodes is from the Original Series and entitled *Mirror, Mirror*. Kirk, Uhura, McCoy and Scott beam up from planet Halkan to be saluted and welcomed by a seriously bearded Mr Spock. In **Star Trek** lore, beards are never a good sign. This Spock is essentially his own evil twin. In fact, everybody aboard is a dark reflection of the crew that Kirk knows. Kirk has to function aboard this ship, enforcing the rule of terror and trying to figure out how to get back home. There

are remote killing machines, murderous helmsmen and plenty of femme fatales. Uhura has to defend herself armed only with a sharp knife and wearing only a bikini version of the uniform. Midribs on full, Captain!

This episode defines the mirror universe; how it works and those who live within it. It is a dark and terrifying place and it is a sad omission that Picard's crew never visit. I mean, who can resist the idea

of an evil Picard with a mean-looking goatee? There would probably be one on Counsellor Troi, too.

But years later, Ben Sisko gets to visit on more than one occasion. *Shattered Mirror* is the third of the visits by crew from **Deep Space Nine**. After another incident with the transporter, Sisko and Jake arrive on Terok Nor, controlled by forces from the Terran Rebellion during the reign of the Klingon-Cardassian alliance - it all gets a bit complicated when it comes to which evil empire is in control at this point. They get to meet the counterpart Jennifer Sisko who didn't die at Wolf 359. She doesn't know who Jake is as he was never born in that universe. Talk about needing counselling after this - so you met your dead mother who never had you in an alternate universe that is no longer accessible?!

Sisko and Jake do not have a quiet time of it as they become embroiled in the machinations of the Intendant and the invasion fleet commanded by Regent Worf. There are epic space battles and brutal betrayals, people run down a lot of corridors, technobabble saves the day and another Ferengi is brutally dispatched.

All in all, really excellent mirror universe episodes that, of course, leave us wanting just that bit more. Unless, that is, you are a Ferengi - things don't seem to end well for them, especially as the Intendant likes to attach them to the walls with large knives. Not much profit there!

Keep on Trekkin' ✦





HORROR

Obscura

This month, the malnourished Martin Vinsworth chews the fat with the screenwriter of fantastic horror comedy COCKNEYS VS ZOMBIES...

# GORE BLIMEY!







One of the most entertaining British films of recent years was *Cockneys Vs Zombies*, directed by Matthias Hoene, who had previously only made the ultra-low-budget shot-on-video Hammer Films comeback *Beyond the Rave*. Despite the title, the film turned out to be amazingly good fun, full of gory moments and, perhaps even more surprisingly, actually hilarious. Blessed with a cast of British film and TV legends, on paper, it had all the hallmarks of being a disaster (much like the updating of Ray Cooney's farce *Run for Your Wife*). However, no matter how many instantly recognisable faces there were on the screen (which included an unlikely band of septuagenarians and octogenarians like Alan Ford, Richard Briers, Honor Blackman, Dudley Sutton, Georgina Hale and Tony Selby), nor how bloody effective the undead killings were, the film may have been cold in the grave had it not been for the witty and engaging script by James Moran, already a veteran of TV (*Doctor Who*, *Primeval*, *Torchwood*) and having made headways onto the big screen with *Severance* and *Tower Block*.

The story follows a group of youngsters who attempt to rob a bank to get the money to save their grandad's rest home from being bulldozed in an urban redevelopment. While they are in the vaults filling their bags, all hell is literally breaking loose as the streets become filled with flesh-eating reanimated corpses. They attempt to get to save the old folk but find their elders are a still a little handy when it comes to looking after themselves in a scrap. Taking in satirical digs at property developers, wannabe gangsters and the way old people are treated (or ignored) in our society and thrusting it head-on with the rising of the undead, it's as perfect as a

plate of pie, mash, and jellied eels. With plenty of liquor. Rather than just espouse the virtues of the film, we thought we'd have a chat with James to find out a little more about the background of the movie and get some titbits on his writing process.

**STARBURST: What was it like coming into *Cockneys Vs Zombies* after the initial story, etc. had been written?**

James Moran: There was an initial pitch that Matthias (the director) had come up with, and they originally came to me to script it from that. I was doing tons of TV at the time, and just couldn't squeeze it in, much as I loved it. A year later, they had a script, but it wasn't the direction they wanted to go in, so they came back to me and asked if I could start again from scratch, a blank slate. I came in with a more comedic, splattery take on it, a new storyline, characters, set pieces, so it then changed from the initial pitch into something else.

**Did you have specific points of reference when writing the script?**

I had made a list of all the things I wanted to get in there - basically, if I go to the cinema on a Friday night, and choose to see *Cockneys Vs Zombies* based on the title, what do I expect to see? I was also very careful to avoid anything that was too similar to *Shaun of the Dead*, even accidentally - it'd be very easy to copy a successful film, but I wanted us to do our own thing. I took that so far, there was a sequence in a pub that I got rid of because *Shaun's* third act is set in a pub! Obviously, we share a similar







©Michael Gill Photography



world, but you have to try to plough your own path, otherwise why bother? My biggest concern was that I really wanted to celebrate the East End, the people and the locations, I didn't want to do a parody or make fun of cockneys, or do yet another gangster movie. That's why they're not gangsters; they're not even good criminals, they've never done this before and feel they have no other option to try and help their granddad. I also set myself the challenge of coming up with three zombie gags that I haven't seen before, and we pulled them all off. The biggest thing for me was: slow or fast zombies? I was determined to have slow zombies, and Matthias and the producers agreed, luckily.

**It's a dream cast for fans of classic British TV/cinema, what challenges or joys did that bring?**

When you write a script, as soon as they cast someone cool, you immediately doubt yourself and think 'but that part isn't big enough!' - and then you do a rewrite for that character. It's actually a good writing exercise, pretend one role has landed an amazing actor, and retune it for them, and it focuses your mind wonderfully. Make sure that everyone has a cool moment, or a speech, or a great death, etc. - make it worth an actor's time to turn up and do your tiny budget movie. The cast really was a dream; I couldn't believe it every time they told me someone had been cast. The hardest thing is seeing all the amazing actors who audition for each part and knowing that only one of them can get the job. We were really spoiled on this.

**Did you write any moments specifically for particular stars? That Richard Briers chase scene is particularly inspired!**

I wrote Ray specifically for Alan Ford; he was in my initial brainstorm notes, and I told the guys that we absolutely had to have him. Luckily, he was available and liked the script. I wrote it with his voice in mind, I re-watched some of his movies and made sure every line sounded right for him. But I had no idea who would play the other parts, it was more a case of writing lots of fun moments, and waiting to see who would do them, so it was a particular joy to find out that Richard Briers would do the slow motion chase and have an Uzi taped to his walking frame. Although after the read-through, Honor Blackman very sweetly said 'I don't swear as much as the others, maybe I'm not allowed...' - I took the hint, and gave her some more swear lines, which she delivered wonderfully.

**What was your favourite moment from the film - the part that really made you proud to have done it?**

There was a moment during my brainstorming where I was trying to figure out why they'd rob a bank, and it had to be something that would make us sympathise with them - we have to root for the leads. Otherwise it turns into a cartoon. Thinking up the plan to save the old folks' home led to the granddad Ray character, then the other elderly characters, then the slow motion chase. That slo-mo chase is probably the best idea I will ever have, ever. I've peaked, may as well pack it in now.







The other thing that makes me proud is putting together what I call 'a feel-good family horror comedy'. I wanted it to be a fun ride, leave people laughing and cheering and wanting to see it again. I've had lots of messages from people saying they watched with their families, kids, and grandparents, who all enjoyed it. Bizarrely, it's one of the warmest things I've written, despite the gore, swearing, and violence...

**Did you approach the script any differently than *Severance* or *Tower Block*? Playing it more for laughs, etc.**

Whenever I write anything, I have a natural tendency to overload it with humour, and then have to pull it back depending on the project. For this, I was able to relax and let it be as funny as it wanted to be. It ended up way more comedic than any of us thought, but it felt right - like I said before, if you see that title and decide you want to see the movie, you're going to expect a lot of laughs.

The thing I didn't do differently was coming up with believable characters who react to extraordinary situations in as realistic a way as possible. You have to buy their reactions, their hopes, dreams, and fears, so you have a spine to hang the scares and laughs from (mostly laughs in this case). I always try to do that with my characters, even when things get really silly. And my number one goal in a horror film is having a solid storyline that would be enough for a movie even without the horror stuff

happening, which then gets derailed when things kick off. That's why horror films are harder than people realise because you're writing two movies at once.

**What's harder to write for you - comedy or drama/horror? Film or TV?**

It's all equally hard, or easy, depending on the day. Sometimes it flows, sometimes it drags. If any of them were easier, I'd just do that all the time! Although I do find it takes longer to do anything non-genre, because you can't usually shake things up by dropping in a serial killer, zombie, alien, or explosion.

**How hands-on were you on set?**

I was on set quite a lot, particularly the first day and any big dialogue days - mainly to watch and have fun, as my job was done - but also to be an extra pair of eyes, a helping hand if necessary. Sometimes they might want an alternate line, or to trim a scene back a bit, so I'd be there to offer up my brain. But that all goes through Matthias - he's in charge when we're on set, so I only did things if he cleared them first. You have to have one person in charge or it's chaos. I also got to be an extra, twice - once as a scared customer in the bank scene, once as a zombie outside the bank. Although my zombie sequence was cut - the other actors were all jealous of how brilliant my acting was, probably.







The film's a few years old now, has gone down really well, and is about to be screened on UKTV for the first time thanks to Horror Channel, is there anything you'd like to say to people who haven't yet seen it?

It was made with a lot of love and passion, by people who love zombies, horror, splatter, and fun. It's rude, swear, gory, but has plenty of warmth and heart. I'm so proud of what we all did, so turn the volume up, have a drink, get some friends over, and watch with a crowd. If you think you'll like it, you definitely will. If you think you won't, give it half an hour and see. Horror Channel is definitely the place to see this, and I'm hugely honoured that it's going to be on there. The cast are amazing, Matthias directs it beautifully, we've got lots of great zombie gags, and Richard Briers with an Uzi. Frankly, if the thought of Richard Briers shooting an Uzi doesn't excite you, I don't think we can be friends.

Your short *Crazy for You* was a hit at festivals a while back; do you have any more urges to direct again soon?

Absolutely. I directed half of *Girl Number 9*, two other shorts (*Ghosting* and *Three Minutes*), and my new web series *Mina Murray's Journal* (a modernised vlog-style adaptation of *Dracula*, flipped around, so Mina is the hero, which started airing on YouTube at the end of September - check out minasjournal.com). I've set up Moranic Productions, a

production company with my partner Cat Davies (a writer/director). We've got a small slate of shorts, features and the web series in development, some of which are for me to write & direct, some are Cat's (we produce them all together). I'm hoping to do another short very soon and have a feature spec we're aiming to get into production too.

What's next for you? Is *Silent Night of the Living Dead* still going ahead?

*Mina Murray's Journal* is the most immediate next thing; I'm almost finished editing that now. *SNotLD* has been dormant for a while, it was in search of a director and a home, but we're hoping to get that revived at some stage (like a good horror villain, no horror movie script ever really dies). I've got another TV episode of *Eve* (Series Three) airing soon on CBBC, a couple of TV shows in development, and some features - as always, you never know which one will get made next, it can be a bit of a lucky dip. I'm focusing hard on directing a feature; that's been my main goal recently.

*COCKNEYS VS ZOMBIES* is screened on Horror Channel in the UK on November 4th. Sky 319, Virgin 149, Freeview 70, Freesat 138.



# COCKNEYS VS ZOMBIES





# THE EYES HAVE IT

Words: Andrew Pollard

An instantly recognisable horror icon, **MICHAEL BERRYMAN** is back in the limelight with the fortieth anniversary release of Wes Craven's 1977 shocker **THE HILLS HAVE EYES**, which launched him on the road to terror stardom. We caught up with him to discuss his memories of the film...

**STARBURST: How did you end up as a part of *The Hills Have Eyes* originally?**

Michael Berryman: Well, way back when, I got my start in film by accident. I left college and was going to homestead in Alaska working on reservation animals and conservation. I moved back to Santa Monica and to Venice Beach, California, to a little gift shop. It was a little tiny store, and a gentleman walked into my store one day – his name was George Pal. And George, of course, produced *War of the Worlds*. We had a lovely conversation, and he said, "By the way, you have an interesting look. I think you would fit for the role of the coroner in *Doc Savage*." And I go, "Oh, I read those books, they were kind of neat, but I'm not an actor." I studied Art History, but I wasn't really an actor. So he said, "Well here, here's my card. Call my office. Think about it." So I did, and I met him and his director, and he said, "Look, it's a two-day job and you'll have a Screen Actor's Guild card. I really want you to be in my movie." I figured that'd be a good way to maybe save a little money to go to Alaska. I worked two days and it got me a \$1,000 or something. So that was it. I thought that would be the career. At the time, Warner Brothers had a casting agent that helped him, and they were doing another movie they were casting. That little movie was *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. I got a phone call one day asking me to come down and meet Miloš [Forman – director] and Michael Douglas and Saul Zaentz and everybody. I didn't have an agent at the time as I was still thinking of going North. So the meeting was incredible, and I was well aware of the play and the book and everything. My father was a very well-known neurologist brain surgeon and all of that, so I was aware of sanitariums. We used to have sanitariums a long time ago, but things have changed since then, fortunately – they were all released by Ronald Reagan. So I went over again to work on *Cuckoo's Nest*, and it was incredible; some of the

best hand-picked people in the world worked on it. One-hundred-and-twenty-seven days later I had new friends – Jack Nicholson, Miloš Forman, Sydney Lassick, Christopher Lloyd, Danny DeVito, everybody. And we made an incredible movie. I learnt a lot, an incredible amount. I asked a lot of questions and they were kind enough to honestly give me some tutoring on film, and I learned a lot about the camera and the lens – all the things that make a movie come together. I'll tell you, over the last forty years and such, I've met a lot of people who are very famous but in some areas are not professional as far as knowing the craft and how to work together as a team. So I was pretty darn excited, and I came back to Santa Monica and I said, "Wow!" I had secured an agent to cut me a deal for the film – I think I made \$700 for a sixty-hour week on *Cuckoo's Nest*. But it was really a wonderful experience. I didn't know what I was going to do next in terms of acting, and I was working odd jobs like actors do. One day, I got a phone call from my agent saying, "Please go to this address and meet some people. It's going to be Barry Cahn, Peter Locke, and a young up-and-coming director named Wes Craven". So I went to the meeting and it







was great; Wes was very quiet, intelligent, he was a professor/teacher, great guy; Peter had a really good sense of humour; and I learned the story of the Bean family and how the story originated. I had actually lived in the desert, in the area where we filmed *The Hills Have Eyes*, so they said, "Well, your look is perfect. You have these little fissures in your skull". I told them that I'd had a craniotomy and how that all came about. It came about because my father was at Nagasaki and Hiroshima at Ground Zero after the bombs. He was a Navy surgeon and went on a secret mission to see the results of all that. When he came home, my parents were excited about having another child and they succeeded in that except his DNA was compromised and I was born with a lot of birth defects. So that's kind of how that came together, and it fit perfectly with the story of *The Hills Have Eyes*. We went out to the desert; we had a very limited budget.

When the movie was out, it was playing in a drive-in in Los Angeles, in the San Fernando Valley; Peter, Wes and I all got in a van and drove up to see the movie. They talked me in to wearing my Pluto outfit. Halfway through the movie, they all thought it would be funny – and I agreed – to go around and bang on car windows and scare people. And I did so, and the last thing I remember was a girl screaming and this big guy with a baseball bat just yelling at me for scaring his girlfriend. He's chasing me! I'm running for my life while on screen everyone's being terrified. In the movie, we're attacking the trailer, and I'm looking to find where the van was as I had lost track. I see the headlights, the van pulls out, Wes Craven is on the side of the van opening the door, shouting to me "Run! Run! Run!" He reached his hand out, I jumped and got in the van, the guy is still chasing us, and we peel off and head to a diner, sit down and have a cup of coffee and a dessert. We all looked at each other and realised that we had a hit on our hands.

**When you were on set, was there a moment during the production that you realised you had something really special, or was it only when you were being chased at a drive-in that you realised that?**

Well, we never thought that the movie would go anywhere. It was very hot at daytime and cold at night, very limited, we had one motorhome that was everything – that was wardrobe, that was where you'd sit and relax, where you'd wait to do your next scene. We didn't think the movie would really go anywhere. A lot of the actors – we called them the 'Whitebread Family', then there was the 'Hills Family' – they were TV actors, soap actors, that kind of stuff. They didn't really like it that much... "Oh, I've gotta go out of the city, way out in the middle of the desert... Victorville, California? Where's that?" I'd lived out in that area so it didn't bother me, but they were kinda not happy about it. We worked well together, we did a good movie, we're all friends to this day, but we never thought the movie would go anywhere. But it caught people's attention, and it's so effective. It's such an effective film. I think we shot it on 16mm. We started looking at the reviews, and one thing led to another, and it caught on. Then we realised we had a hit! I remember a couple of years after the film had been released; I was looking at the Los Angeles Times. It was during the time that it was out, when it was released. There was a full-page poster, and there I was on the poster. That was really, really nice. Then in the small corner of that newspaper was a little box that said 'In a galaxy far, far away... Star Wars' Well, I was doing a movie with Mark Hamill, and I brought this to the set one night – the movie was called *Guyver*, a cool movie – and I go, "Hey Mark, look what I've got here". And then I go, "Look, I'm on a full-page ad for a movie". He goes, "Wow! That's pretty cool!" I said, "What do you think this little box in the corner, what's this Star Wars about?". Then we started to laugh, which went on for a while. He asked whether the film did a good box office, so I said, "Wait a minute, aren't you in that movie?!" Then he

laughed and autographed it for me. So I had a joke about how big my ad was compared to his little movie, and I hoped his career went somewhere after that.

**Does it ever surprise you how popular the film still is this day amongst so many different generations?**

Good question. No, it does not. Over the many decades it's held its own. The remake was a good attempt, but it didn't have the depth. One of the things about remakes, especially in *The Hills Have Eyes* – it's prettier to look at and all that, and it has its moments – it doesn't have the grit, it doesn't hold the tension. And one of the most important aspects of good storytelling, and how we managed to accomplish that in *The Hills Have Eyes*, is something I picked up on during a Bruce Lee movie. I think it was during *Enter the Dragon*. Bruce is going to go to Han's tournament and he's talking. He says, "You gotta hang on. I've gotta teach this kid some martial arts". And the boy's trying to learn, he's young. Bruce says, "Hit me! No, no, no. Not in anger. Emotional content. It's like pointing your finger to the moon and don't focus on your finger or you will miss out on all of that celestial glory". The point being you have blocking, you have action, you have wardrobe, your props, you're all set for the scene, and you have words to say, your dialogue. A lot of people hit their mark, blurt out their lines, and that's it. Well that's not enough. What we had on *The Hills Have Eyes* was the believability; everybody believed in their character, everybody created a personal history with their character. So the interaction was more honest, had more depth, had emotional content. And that's why it's held its own. Of course, Wes had a brilliant eye in his editing and his directing, and he knew how to bring everybody together. So that's why it's still so strong.

**How was the experience the second time around for *The Hills Have Eyes II*? We guess there was a bit more money involved and a bit more faith in Wes...**

They had a little more budget, so the wardrobe was a little cleaner, we had different lights, we had HMI lights, so the lighting was a little better. I wasn't very excited about the Reaper character; I thought John Bloom was just sort of walking through it. The make-up was terrible. I loved some of the aspects, like the dog







having the flashbacks. The sequel was okay but it doesn't have the punch that the original did, honestly. It's prettier to look at. Some of the situations that the kids find themselves in, that Cass was blind was kind of an interesting element that Wes put together, but the actors just weren't into it. To them it was another job, they weren't that into it really. Janus Blythe really did a good job, but there are some silly moments that were unnecessary. Willard Pugh, who was the African-American gentleman, he has a girlfriend. Then the other gal, there's shenanigans going on, danger here and there, then the girl takes a shower and he's going to jump her bones. I thought that was a real cheap shot. I mean, really, it's almost racist, for Christ's sake. I thought that was unnecessary. We had a different executive producer who was problematic. I was out the night before doing a fundraiser for the Animal Shelter in Lake Morongo Valley where we were at. When we got back to the hotel, I remember the next day there was the newspaper with our pictures, me and the bionic dog and our fundraising event - this is all good publicity - but then I noticed there was the Sheriff Department there. People were upset - parents - and something very horrible was going on with one of our producers. It had nothing to do with Wes; it just had something to do with one of the producer investors. I can't go into too much other detail, just use your imagination, but I was bloody furious. I remember walking in to the production office, I had heard what had happened, and I guess somebody had written a big cheque to silence any prosecution. A long story short, I closed the door and talked to that individual and gave them the fucking riot act because I thought he was a very terrible person. So that didn't help as far as my memories of how fantastic the sequel was. But people liked it. It was a job, it was okay, but it couldn't touch anywhere near the impact of the first one. People come to signings, they don't bring *Part II*. Maybe five out of a thousand will - it's always the original.

**Much like yourself, Wes was obviously an icon of the genre. With *The Hills Have***

**Eyes, he was still in the infancy of his career. What was it like working with him on those pictures?**

Well yeah, I also worked with Wes on a movie-of-the-week. It was called *Invitation to Hell*, with Susan Lucci. That was kind of trippy and for TV. We also did, with Ernest Borgnine and Sharon Stone, her first movie, we did *Deadly Blessing* in Texas. That was a different kind of role. But I've always loved working with Wes. We were good friends, I went to his wedding, was at his services at the Directors Guild last February. He was just a kind, intelligent, soft-spoken great guy. Just very, very sharp-witted. He knew how to weave a story, and I always had a wonderful time with Wes. He really was a good guy.

**We guess doing a lot of the big horror conventions keeps you in touch with a lot of your filmmaking contemporaries. You've all had similar careers and all been thrust into the horror spotlight at times. Does that result in a bond there between each of you?**

It's a very tight community. We all know one another. Like, I saw recently my friend Jeffrey Coombs. Don Bradley, Sid Haig... all of us... Billy Moseley, Kane Hodder. We're all very good friends, we all keep in touch, we know about our kids and families or if somebody has a health issue. It is an extended family. It's probably more so than in any other genre, to be quite honest. We compare notes for work, we help each other get on other projects, and we keep in touch. It's friendships that have lasted decades. So I'm very grateful to George Pal for getting me in this line of work and for some economic viability and health insurance and all the things that go along with it. They're family in the real world, and we work together on projects, like Gunnar Hansen's *Death House*. That's being pushed by Mr. Harrison [Smith], our director. It is a special bond, I have to admit that. That's what makes it somewhat fun, and especially at the conventions - it's the fans! I answer all of my fan mail myself, I always have. The fans are intelligent. These aren't just over-the-top 16-year-olds that have monster posters on their wall; these are people with children and grandchildren, and they have real jobs, some in the government, some are professors. They know everyone in the horror genre, they're well-read, educated, have a great sense of humour - a good balance. They have, I would say, a very good sense of humanity, which is very important to me. They care about more than just getting scared; blood 'n' guts 'n' special effects 'n' titties aren't just their cup of tea.

**As someone who's so engrossed in the horror genre, what is it do you think that keeps all the fans coming back for more? Is it as simple as the age-old thing of wanting to be scared?**

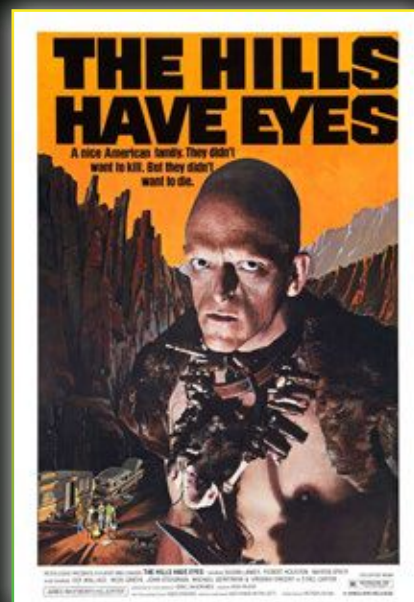
I think quite simply it's, like Wes and I, like we all know - I mean, I grew up watching Vincent Price and [Boris] Karloff - it's just people like to be scared. And you want to survive the event. It's cathartic. It's almost therapeutic. There is a difference between that and snuff films and just gratuitous violence, disgusting things like... I'm not a big fan of *The Human Centipede*. I've heard about it, but I don't care how intelligent the

concept is behind it, I just find it disgusting. But it's a free country, you can say what you want at the box office and people will respond in kind. But I abhor some of the things that happened, like Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* - killing animals to be on scene, being gross. I actually went on a film after we had agreed to reshoot a continuous scene where I had done something to a young lady. The way it was filmed, I go, "No, no, we're not doing that. We can do it after the fact, let the imagination of the audience take the place of this gratuitous bullshit that you want to do. I'm not doing that." Then when I arrived, they went, "We're gonna do it the other way." I said, "Nope, we're not. It was a conversation I recorded with your permission, here's my contract, we'll do it the other way." They said no, so I told them that they were in breach of contract, give me a full cheque, put me on a plane tomorrow morning. And they did. So my point is, the attraction is basically a thrill-ride. To a degree, what elements people appreciate it kind of reflects more on a viewing audience. If your personal preferences are blood 'n' guts 'n' gore, maybe you're 14 years old. Or maybe you're a special effects artist! I mean I've seen some martial arts movies that are over the top, where people's heads explode. When it's done in a gruesome manner, it becomes basically torture pornography. It's pretty disgusting.

**Do you think in more recent years the art of good horror storytelling has been lost a little, that people make it a bit too unrelenting, nobody comes out of the film really 'winning' as the audience is beaten down with gore and violence in modern horror?**

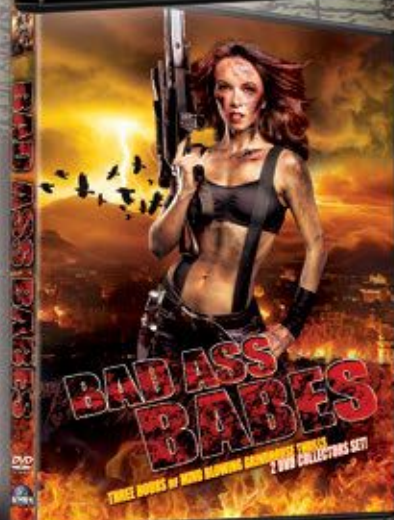
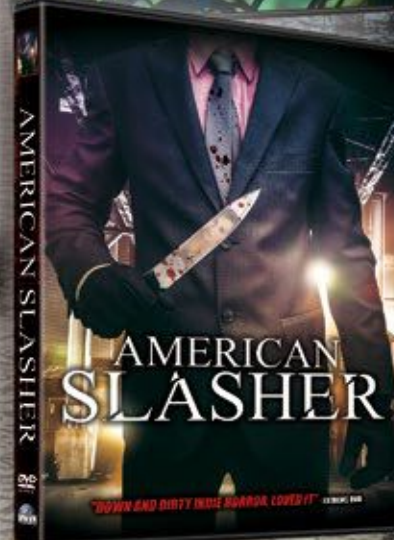
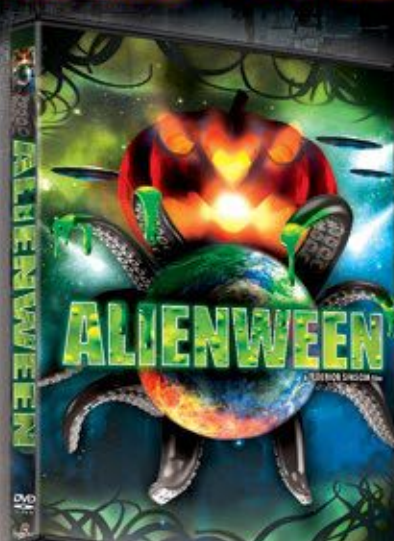
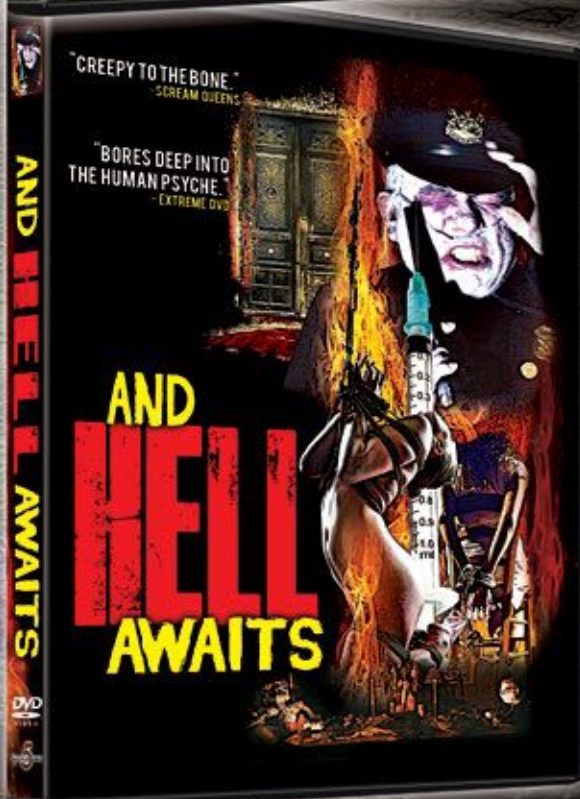
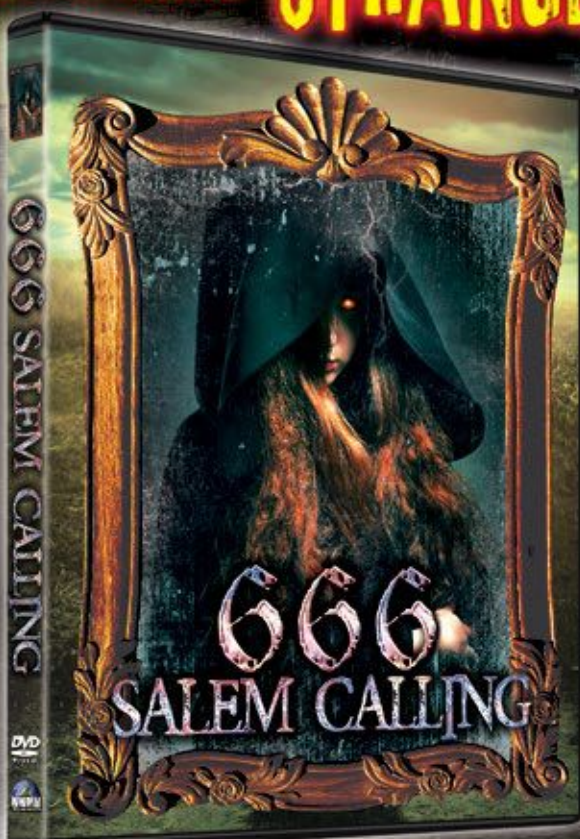
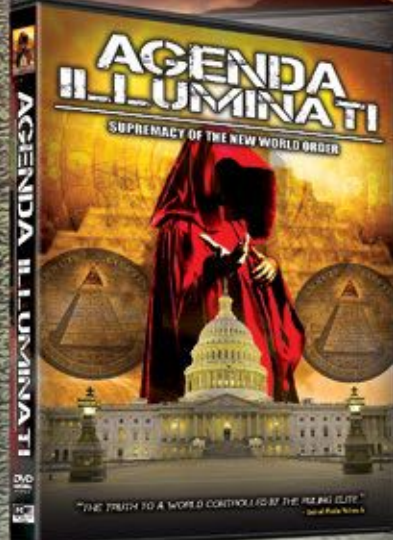
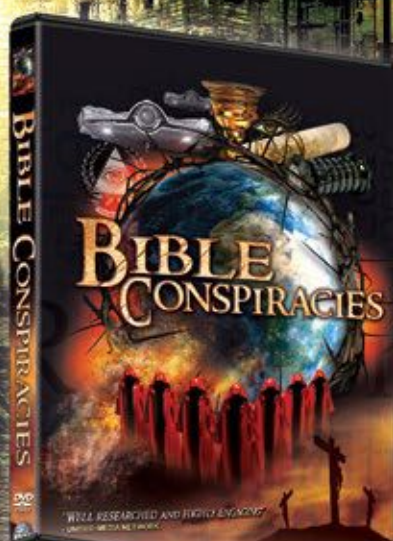
Well there's probably more of that than there maybe has been in the past. With the Internet also, there's some really creepy areas of the Internet. Then there are video games that I think are almost clinically depressing.

**The newly remastered Blu-ray release of *THE HILLS HAVE EYES* is out now.**





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5



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As BIG FINISH unleash Series Five of **SURVIVORS**, we catch up with the creative team to find out what we can expect...

# THE FOURTH HORSEMAN RETURNS

by Rich Cross

**S**ince *Survivors* first resurfaced in the world of audio adventures in 2014, Big Finish has ensured that those who survived *The Death* have faced a torrid time: suffering at the hands of deluded settlement leaders, blood-crazed cannibals, bigoted bully-boys and a self-serving hippy charlatan. In the storylines of Series Five, released this November, there's no let-up in sight for those battling to secure humanity's future.

"One of the things that I wanted to do with *Survivors* was unleash a second wave of the plague," explains producer David Richardson. "We've now got these decimated communities that have only just started to rebuild. What would be the scariest thing that could happen? I thought that that would be a plague coming back and people starting to die all over again. So that's the very grim scenario we have in this latest box set."

Script editor Matt Fitton suggests that it's not hard to imagine how survivors

might react to such a new threat.

"Everyone gets caught up in a kind of fear and panic about a second outbreak and what it might do to their newly established society, just taking its first steps into the future," he says.

Two years on from the pandemic, there's even more at stake. "People are well organised enough to try to contain things themselves and to keep everyone safe; apart from the ones who don't know about it yet," explains Fitton. "And then there's this rogue element; those who are carrying it from place to place without realising it." The actions of these newly infected survivors put everything in jeopardy once again.

"The person who becomes the main carrier is someone who's very capable and who finds themselves in a position of authority," Fitton reveals. "But once they realise what's going on, they can't quite let go of that status. They feel that they should be able to do something about it.

*They can't just give up. But that puts other people in danger, and we see the course of action that other communities feel driven to take in response."*

As the series' heroes are forced to confront this latest terrible threat, Big Finish's writers have had to tread carefully through the already established *Survivors*' canon. The timeline of the audio adventures has progressed through each box set, and the events of Series Five are set in the latter months of the TV show's second series. Ian McCulloch (Greg) remains impressed by Big Finish's attentiveness when crafting each new set of stories. "It's great that they consider it all very seriously," he says, "and have made sure that everything matches the storyline of the television series."

The most recent *Survivors* box sets have alternated the focus between Abby (played by Carolyn Seymour), a character not seen in the second or third series of *Survivors* on TV, and Greg and Jenny







(played by Lucy Fleming). But Big Finish were keen to find a way to reunite the show's three leads once more. "We actually missed having Carolyn and Lucy and Ian together in the studio," Richardson admits. "And they missed being together too. But the timeline of series doesn't allow for them to all to find each other again."

"What we decided to do was to bring the actors together, but ensure that their characters never meet," he reveals. "And I think that that has led to some very powerful scenes in these episodes; where they're caught up in the same events, and are very close to each other geographically, but never actually meet. Which, of course, in a scenario where there's no communication system, is exactly what would happen."

During a short break in recording, Seymour confirms that the trio of characters "just keep missing each other. It's heart-breaking, really, and it keeps happening." She continues to relish the chance to re-inhabit the character of Abby. "I love it," she beams. "I don't know how they wrote her so well, really. I just identified immediately. I just become her and it's as simple as that. Big Finish is the most fabulous company to work for. I love coming in."

Fleming confirms that all three actors are revelling in the working reunion. "None of us have really changed at all," she reflects. "The characteristics that you remember of people in the past – Ian's humour and Carolyn's strength. Nothing changes – we just look a bit older."

Driven by the need to discover the fate of her son Peter, a quest that is "still paramount", says Seymour, Abby is once again able to be a lone crusader. "She didn't have time to do it in the original series", Seymour continues, "she was too busy taking care of people that she was responsible for. With this one, she has time. She has no binding commitments."

The fifth series sees the return of

recurring characters ex-civil servant Evelyn Piper (played by Zoë Tapper) and the emotionally scarred Hannah (voiced by Fiona Sheehan). Tapper played the role of doctor Anya Raczynski in the BBC's 2008 TV remake of *Survivors*, and her involvement provides a link between all three incarnations of the series. "It actually came about because Zoë was in working with John Hurt on *The War Doctor* series," explains Richardson. "The affection that she clearly holds for *Survivors* is one of the reasons that made her want to do it."

Joining the expanding ensemble for this series are *Doctor Who* regulars Neve McIntosh and Richard Hope. McIntosh takes on the pivotal role of Carol Baker,

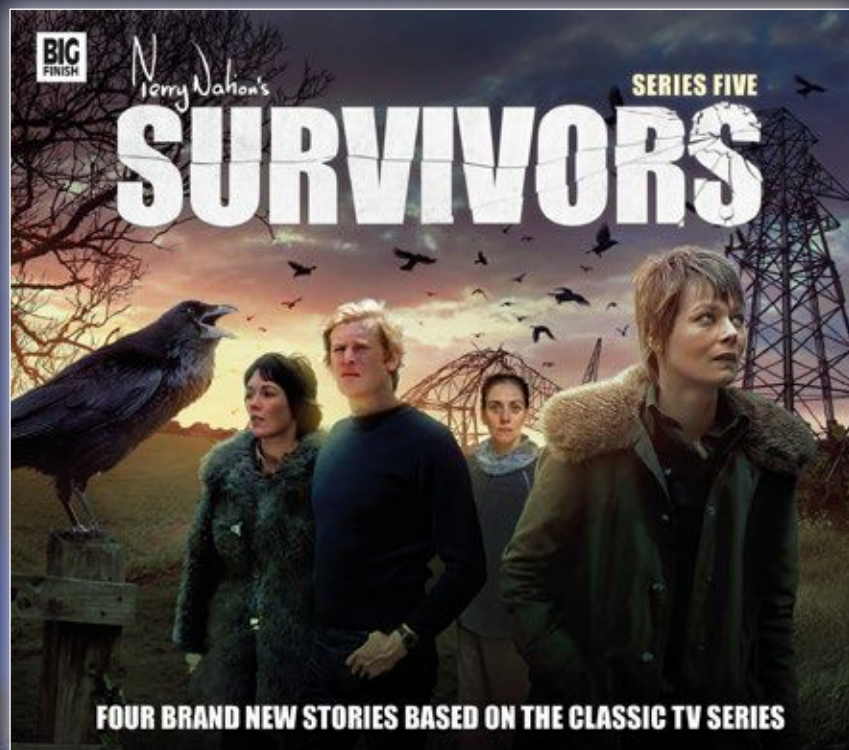
head of the Maythorne community and an important catalyst in accelerating the spread of the new virus.

These latest episodes also bring to the fore the 'Whitecross' community, the centre of operations in Series Two of the TV series, and explore efforts to reconnect the first electricity supplies, one of the central themes of the third TV series. But with the new virus threatening everything and everyone, the finale of the audio Series Five shows how merciless its impact can be. Despite the death toll, with Series Six and Seven now confirmed, Big Finish's *Survivors* series is itself clearly in rude and vibrant health.

The original series' leads are full of ideas for future storylines. "I wouldn't mind seeing some environmental themes in there," Seymour suggests. "Having someone looking at how the long-term use of pesticides destroys the viability of land." Fleming is hopeful of balancing adventure stories with more reflective moments. "I think it will be important to include some of the more philosophical questions that we came up with in the TV stories, as well as all of the all-action stuff," she says. For McCulloch, there's more dramatic mileage in the medical challenges the survivors face, wondering, "What on earth would you do when health care has reverted to a medieval level?"

All three of them are eager to continue, and to see their characters' stories evolve and intertwine with the new protagonists introduced by Big Finish. "Abby could go on for ever," Seymour insists. "Even until I'm 93 and I get wheeled into the studio in my bathrobe and slippers." Now, there's a survivor talking...

Series Five of Big Finish's *SURVIVORS* audio adventures is released in November.





# IT'S STILL 1977 AND LOOK WHO'S BACK!



## THE WORLD'S FIRST FULL COLOUR HORROR FILMS MAGAZINE

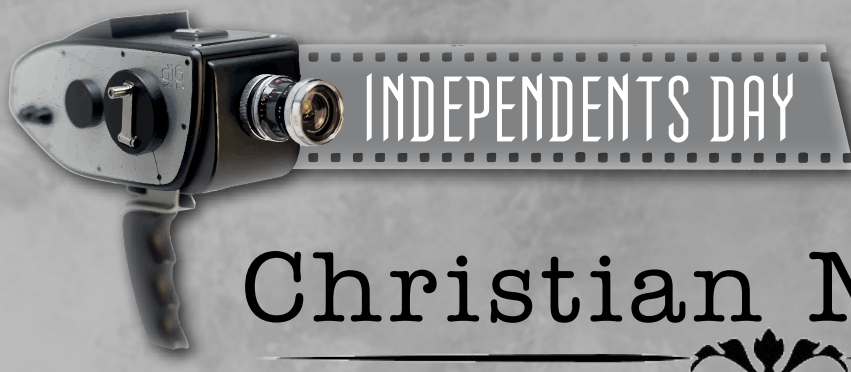
...JUST WON'T STAY DEAD! Launched in 1973, its second issue was banned by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise and every copy was destroyed (making it also the world's RAREST magazine!). But it survived this setback and kept on coming until 1976 when its editor found a new toy and launched House of Hammer. Well now it's risen from its grave and continued where it left off, with the original editor finally putting together the long-promised Double X issue AND a gap-filling English language printing of issue 2. And more besides (check out *The Hammer Lovers* main man Matt, left, modelling just one of the three posters in issue #20!). Join us on our magic journey... back to the 1970s!



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# OPEN IT OUT IF YOU DARE!





by Martin Unsworth

# Christian Nicolson

**One of the standout hits of the recent STARBURST INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL was the fun sci-fi movie THIS GIANT PAPIER-MÂCHÉ BOULDER IS ACTUALLY REALLY HEAVY. It gained New Zealand all-rounder CHRISTIAN NICOLSON the Independents Day Award for encapsulating the spirit of indie filmmaking. We caught up with the energetic, but highly busy Kiwi to find out more about the film...**



**STARBURST:** You weren't originally meant to be the lead - what happened there?

Christian Nicolson: Well, I cast my friend who is also a filmmaker. After three days of filming, he dropped out. He could see it may take a bit longer than three months and he wanted to do his own stuff. It left me with not much alternative than to do it myself. It was the only role I was remotely suited to and I knew it well. But it was still a big call as I knew the other actors were all far more seasoned than I, who had virtually never done it before. But the show had to go on. It took me eight months of auditions and searching to find them in the first place and I didn't want production to stop. So that was that. I was Tom.

**There's a lot of attention to detail in the recreation of the classic sci-fi B-movie look - how much planning etc. went into all that?**

Constant. I was always thinking about it, sourcing, referencing, and researching. Really, I just watched heaps of old movies and TV programmes. It was a bit easy to get distracted, actually. Reliving my early years of *Blake's 7* and *Star Trek* or watching *Flash Gordon*.

I really was quite particular about the right amount of old school kookiness I wanted to achieve. Not too much and not too little. Sometimes you couldn't even tell, so I made sure we moved in for a close up to show it up. I was quite fastidious over it, really.

**What was the hardest part of getting the film made?**

Apart from the money. Always the money. It was annoying and stressful. Every part had its challenges though. But not having money meant I had to do most things myself.

Most people worked for love not money, so when people let you down or cancelled at the last minute, you could never get angry. You just had to find a solution another way. I was always having to find a make-up artist on the Friday night before the shoot because the one we had just got booked for a Saturday job. This was always really stressful. One of my actors wouldn't go on without make-up so I was really stuffed if I couldn't find one.



It's hard on your family too being absent so much. As supportive as everybody was, it was still a strain from time to time.

**You're very much an all-rounder - art, music, film etc. - is there anything in particular that brings you the most satisfaction?**

I just like being creative. I love the film process and have always dreamed of making a film. This was my chance and I took it. But I still love painting and sculpture and music. I just need more time to do it all. This film is all-consuming - even now.

**And is there any creative outlet you've not tried that you want to?**

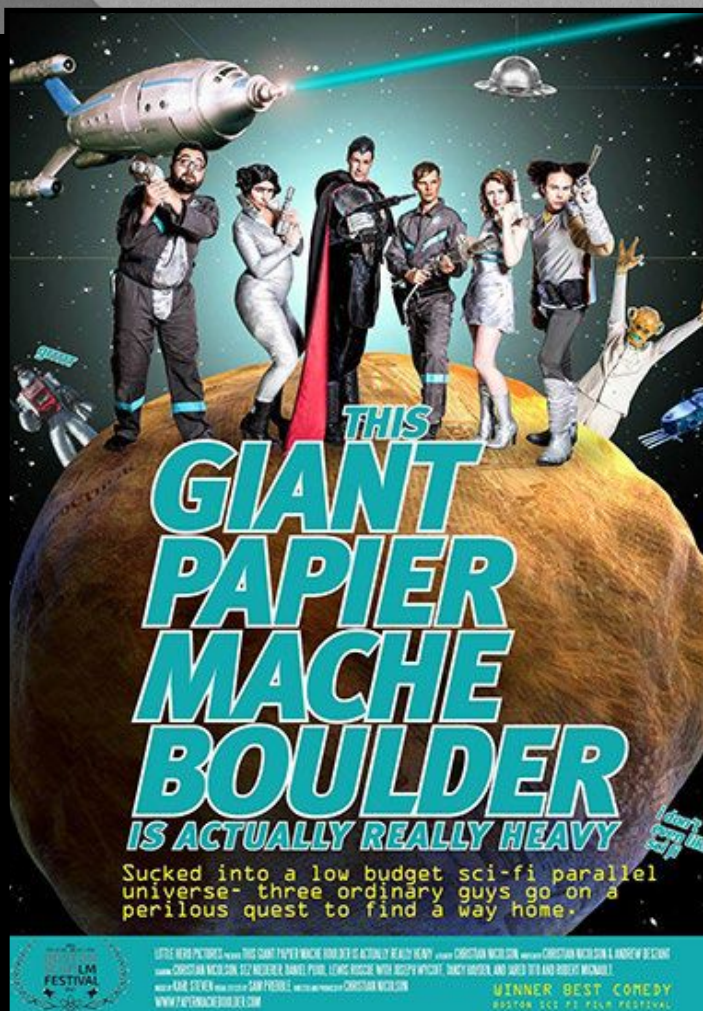
That's a good question! Maybe when I do it, I will probably say I have always wanted to do that. At the moment, I can't think what it is. I am on a ferry coming back from a showing of my movie on an island off the coast of Auckland. It was fun. Many people were dressed up in spacey costumes for the film!

**The film is full of inspired moments that spoof and make the most of the low budget - do you have a particular favourite?**

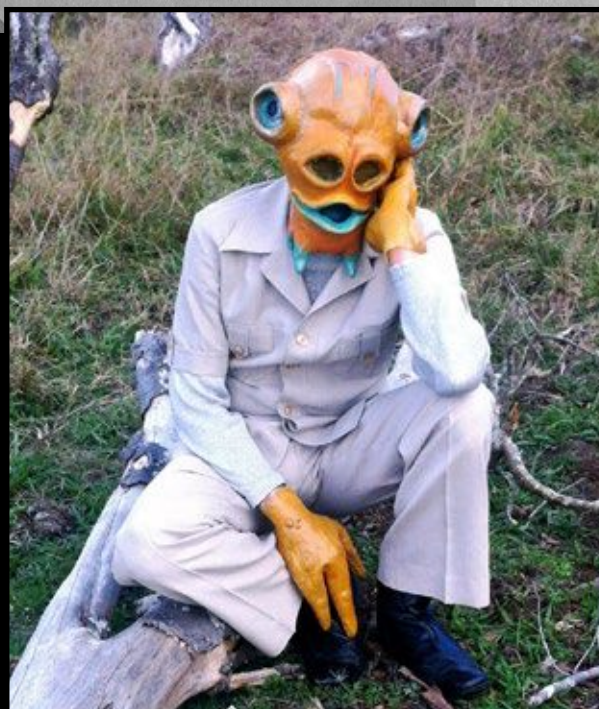
Ohh - that's a great question. Because I know I will do. I love the scene where Gavin fights Norg in the quarry. But that's not really because of its low budgetness, more the dialogue. I love a lot of the costumes more than anything. I love the fact that the caveman chief wears a Woolrest underlay, the guardsmen have buckets



## THIS GIANT PAPIER-MÂCHÉ BOULDER IS ACTUALLY REALLY HEAVY











on their heads and I particularly love Gavin's gun with the hairdryer and a stove element. I love the part when the sound goes out of sync, the cardboard robots and the part when the travellers walk off towards the space tow. That bit really sums it all up really.

**The film has taken you all over the world already and won numerous awards; what's the next step for Boulder?**

I am currently doing an independent theatrical release in my home country New Zealand. After that, I am looking at getting it to the rest of the world.

**How are you going to follow the film up?**

If this is a success, I will make a sequel. I have a few other ideas, though. But either way, not without some funding. Once this way is enough.

**If someone came to you for advice on making a film affordably, while still making it appear expensive, what would you tell them?**

Don't hold back. Plan your shots, get a good camera, find some great locations and get creative. I used quite a few exotic locations to give mine a more expensive look.

*You can find out about Christian's artwork at [christiannicolson.co.nz](http://christiannicolson.co.nz) and keep up to date with screenings and more at [facebook.com/PaperMacheBoulderMovie](https://facebook.com/PaperMacheBoulderMovie).*





# REVIEW:

## THIS GIANT PAPIER-MÂCHÉ BOULDER IS ACTUALLY REALLY HEAVY

**CERT:** TBC / **DIRECTOR:** CHRISTIAN NICOLSON / **SCREENPLAY:** ANDREW BESZANT, CHRISTIAN NICOLSON / **STARRING:** CHRISTIAN NICOLSON, SEZ NIEDERER, DANIEL PUJOL, LEWIS ROSCOE, JOSEPH WYCOFF, TANSY HAYDEN, JARRED TITO / **RELEASE DATE:** TBC

Sometimes films of a low budget just have to make do with what they have at hand when it comes to props, locations, and whatnot. It's one of the reasons there aren't many sci-fi films made at this level. What *This Giant Boulder* (let's just call it that for now) does so well is take this necessity for economy to the logical level and craft the whole story around it.

Tom (Nicolson) and Gavin (Roscoe) are persuaded by their friend Jeffrey (Pujol) to attend a sci-fi convention against their better judgement. While Jeffrey's having the time of his life, the others are less than enthused. Going in to see a screening of an old black and white film, they are suddenly sucked into another dimension - one that takes place in the world of the low budget clichéd movie. Although this may seem like something completely unbelievable, the friends shrug off the ludicrous scenario and throw themselves into the surroundings. That is, until the evil Lord Froth (Wycoff) takes a dislike to them and threatens to pursue them across the universe.

Landing on a nearby planet, they pick up two allies, Emmanor (Niederer) and Bruce (Tito), and set about getting back to their own reality while avoiding the usual array of adversaries.

There's so much joy and passion in *This Giant Boulder*, not to mention a genuine love of the genre it's spoofing, that it's hard not to get swept along with the fun on screen. Full of little touches (everything in the space world is constructed from everyday items, from Fruit Shoot lids as buttons to potato mashers and old hairdryers) and an attention to detail that many of the 'big boys' would overlook, there's so much to take in that a second viewing is essential.

Writer/director/star (heck, he even provided the song that accompanies the obligatory 'romance' scene) Nicolson is easy to watch; an instantly likeable lead, he's self-effacing and charming, and plays off against the other characters well. Even the more 'kooky' characters such as Jeffrey - an OTT interpretation of a regular sci-fi geek - are not too far 'out there' that they can't be related to. Equally, Sez Niederer



is utterly enchanting as the 'Princess' (we're not going to go into too much detail of the plot, as it would spoil the fun of the reveal) and Tansy Hayden's buck-toothed, scarily mono-browed henchwoman Fralligay is strangely endearing, but the scene stealer is surely Wycoff as the Vader-esque Lord Froth, literally chewing the scenery with delicious practically 'tash-twiddling villainy.

There are so many fantastic moments it's hard to single some out, but we'd certainly say watch out for the space market (with plenty of background characters worth watching out for), the encounter with the Skaer, a Welsh-voiced felt puppet who is definitely not a Muppet ("that proud race is long extinct"), and Froth and his army attempting a silent approach on our heroes.

With such lo-fi special effects, *This Giant Boulder* could have easily fallen on its arse as a pathetic pastiche, but the references (both verbally and visually) are so spot-on that it just wouldn't have worked with a massive budget for believable ships and planets where you can't see the wires holding them up.

If we had to make any criticism, it would be that at just under two hours, it's a little long, but we'd be hard pushed to think of anything that could be cut without being missed.

*This Giant Boulder* has already been screened at several festivals in the UK (including the STARBURST International Film Festival), and if it happens to play anywhere near you, don't pass up on the chance of seeing it. Seriously, you'll be missing out on your next favourite cult movie.





# DESIGNS ON BOND

by Paul Mount

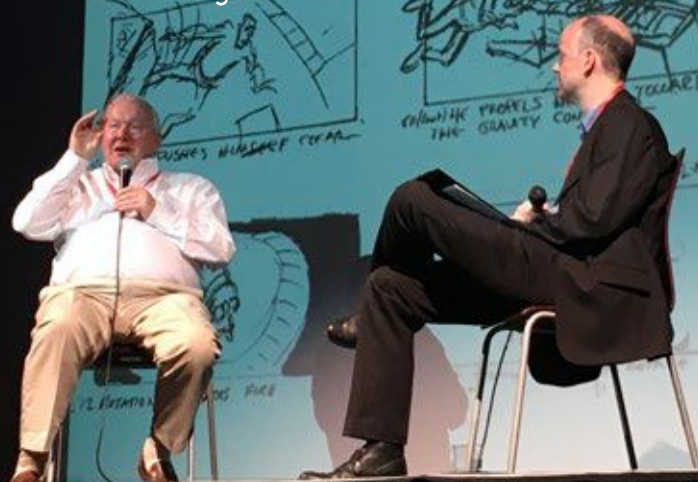
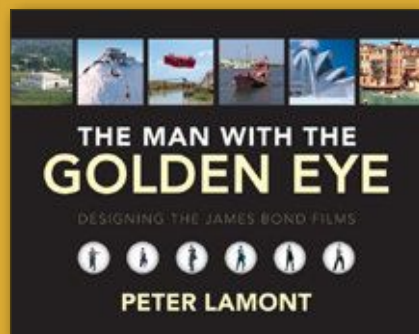


Photo by Kristian Williams - taken at STARBURST International Film Fest

Peter Lamont is, quite simply, a legend in the world of filmmaking. Across a career spanning six decades, Peter's name has become virtually synonymous with the exploits of 007 himself – as draughtsman, set decorator, art director and ultimately production designer, he worked on eighteen of Bond's extraordinary adventures. He has also collaborated extensively with James Cameron on films such as *ALIENS*, *TRUE LIES* and, of course, the box office-busting *TITANIC*, which finally won him an Oscar for his incredible work recreating the iconic doomed ocean liner. As a new book chronicling his life and work, *THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN EYE: DESIGNING THE JAMES BOND FILMS* is published, STARBURST spent some time with Peter and took a trip through sixty years of Bond and beyond...



**STARBURST: Your professional CV - your career - reads pretty much like a definitive guide to working in the film industry and you've been involved in some of the most loved feature films ever made. How did your amazing behind-the-scenes journey begin?**

Peter Lamont: During the Second World War, I didn't get the 11-plus - as it was then - but I won a 13-plus scholarship and went to High Wycombe Technical Institute. They had four institutes: the commercial one for girls, typewriting and all that, engineering, building and art. I went to their junior art school and there were only twenty of us in the form; occasionally I still see people now who were there at that time with me. I did three years there as the war hadn't quite finished when I finished school. My Dad was a sign writer at Denham Studios and he knew someone at Pinewood, so I went along and they offered me a job as assistant print boy runner to Edward Carrick, whose father was Lord Craig, a great stage designer. Teddy gave me a drawing board and I got to like it so I decided to stay with it. I then went into the Air Force for two years, did a flight mechanics course and then came out of the Services.

**Was it easy to return to your career after you left the Air Force?**

Yes, because at the time when you came out you had to be reinstated in your old job irrespective and as I'd worked at Pinewood,

they had to take me back. I got the great sum then of £7 and ten shillings a week! My first film was *Captain Boycott*, which starred Stewart Granger, and as the years went on I worked with the likes of John Box, Jack Stephens, Ernest Archer, and Jack Maxsted on pictures such as *The Woman In Question* and *The Browning Version*. Then we went to Denham Studios and did *Robin Hood and His Merry Men* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. I gradually started working with other people including a fellow called Bernard Robinson, who did *Reach for the Sky* and *Carve Her Name With Pride*, and I became his draftsman. One day, he said he'd promote me to assistant art director and he gave me a piece of advice which I've never forgotten: "If you go on the soundstage and anybody asks you a question, think about the question, make your decision and whether that decision turns out to be right or wrong, always stand by what you've said."

**1964 saw the beginning of your long association with the James Bond series when you found yourself working on *Goldfinger*. How did you become involved with the world of 007?**

I was working for Independent Artists at Beaconsfield Studios in Buckinghamshire in the early 1960s on things like the comedy *Strictly For The Birds* and the TV series *The Human Jungle* starring Herbert Lom. But just afterwards the money dried up at Independent Artists and they closed

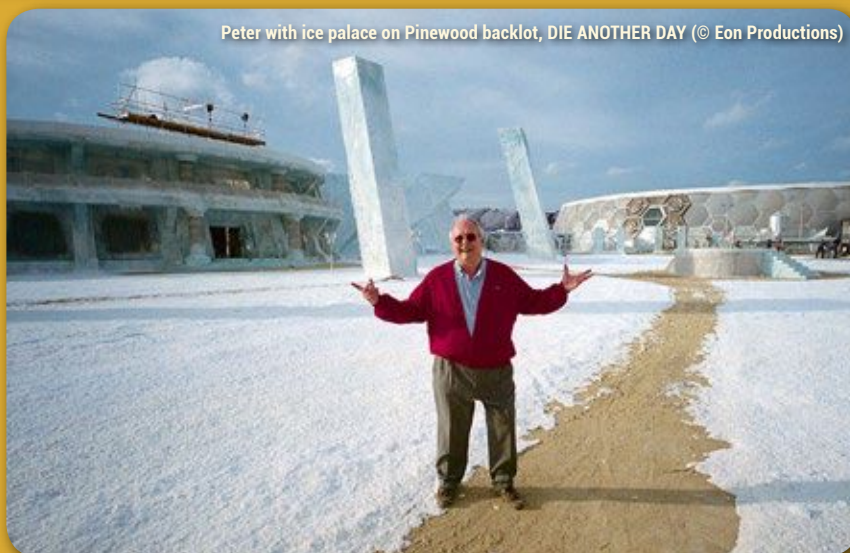


Beaconsfield - although it's since reopened as the National Film and Television School. I was out of work then and Peter Murton, who I had known for a long time and who was the art director on *Goldfinger*, said "Look, we've got a set decorator but why don't you'd come and draught for us?" So I went just across the road to Pinewood and Ken Adam [production designer] came in with his big cigar and gave me a big buff envelope full of photographs of the exterior of Fort Knox. Not even the President is actually allowed into Fort Knox; the only person from the Government who gets in is the secretary from the Treasury. Ken told me the Fort Knox set was a major build and there was a possibility it was going to be built in Portugal, but in the end they decided to do it in the studios. So over the next four weeks I did a model, drew it up, did all the details, sent it to be estimated by accounts and it came to about £67,000 and I thought 'Jesus Christ, I'm going to get fired for this!' Harry [Saltzman], Cubby [Broccoli] and Guy Hamilton [*Goldfinger* director] came in one day and they decided to rationalise it by cutting it back and getting another estimate which came in at £45,000 and then they said 'OK, do it'. We had to lay roads down, we went into Black Park [the country park area adjacent to Pinewood Studios], we moved trees into the correct places, and we created Bullion Boulevard, which is where Fort Knox is actually situated. Guy came in with Ken one day and said 'What do you think the gold vaults look like?' and I made some enquiries - there was no Internet back then so you couldn't just look it up! I went to Illustrated London News where you can see the Bank of England vaults and it's full of small rooms full of bars of gold on trolleys. Ken and I then came up with this bloody cathedral of gold which appeared on screen.

**A Bond baptism of fire! Presumably by this point you were already aware of the growing phenomenon of the Bond series?**

To tell you the truth, we used to have the Daily Express as a broadsheet in those days and in the back there was a cartoon strip of James Bond. I always used to look

Peter with ice palace on Pinewood backlot, *DIE ANOTHER DAY* (© Eon Productions)



at it - I remember the *Octopussy* strip that was running at the time. Anyway, *Dr No* had already been out and I wasn't much interested in that but *From Russia With Love* had just come out so my wife and I went to Slough and we queued up and went to the Grenada and watched it and I thought 'Wow, the props are good, the action is good, there's a lot going on here', so I thought I wanted to get in with this lot!

**Bond called again with *Thunderball*, which was the first of four 007s where you were a set decorator. How did that come about?** Harry Saltzman called me into his office and said 'Look, we've got a big production coming up, have a two-week holiday on us and then we're going to start *The Ipcress File*'. That was an entirely different deal but then Ken breezed into the office and said 'children, somebody had better learn to swim underwater, we're doing *Thunderball*.' So I took him at his word, went to Slough Sub-Aqua Club and did a crash course. I got involved with the submerged Vulcan aircraft and went all over the place looking at Vulcans and collecting bits and

pieces because we had to build one in the Bahamas. I went to the Bahamas for two weeks and came home fourteen weeks later! The first time I went down, there was the Vulcan bomber underwater and the whole unit was down there with the bomb carrier and so on.

**You were also around at a time of great seismic change in the Bond series when Sean Connery surrendered the role to new boy George Lazenby. How did you find both actors to work with?**

Everybody knew Sean. He was always very professional. But he had a niggle with the producers because when we flew to the Bahamas for *Thunderball*, *Goldfinger* was spiralling and, of course, he felt he'd been cheated financially. But if you sign a contract, you sign a contract. It might be good, it might be duff, who knows? But he held it against them and walked. When it came to the next one, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, I saw the tests and George was obviously the choice. But he was an idiot on set, very arrogant. Diana Rigg said to him 'George, get one under your belt, you're not James Bond yet.' He could have carried on for years as Bond and I think he still trades on Bond. He wanted to get his leg over everybody! But *OHMSS* is a good film; I think if Sean had done it, it would have made more money than all the others.

**Having worked closely with all the Bonds, who would you say was your favourite?**

Pierce Brosnan was my favourite as both a person and an actor. Like Cubby and Roger Moore, he made a point of knowing everyone's name. He was always well turned out, he knew everything, and he knew the part. But by the time we got to number four with him they were going back to *Casino Royale* but as he was already Bond and that's the picture where he 'becomes' Bond they couldn't really go on with him.

**What are your thoughts on Roger Moore and Timothy Dalton?**

Roger was a good safe choice, a steady pair of hands. He was a nice man and like Cubby he knew everyone by their Christian

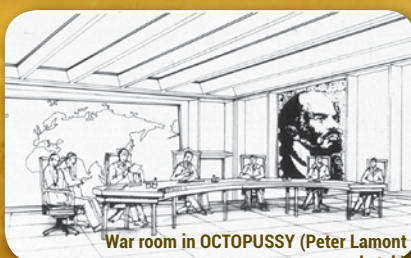
OHMSS (Peter far left, in black)







THUNDERBALL Vulcan prop (© Peter Lamont)



War room in OCTOPUSSY (Peter Lamont)



Peter on TWINE submarine set (© Eon Productions)



MOONRAKER (© Eon Productions)



Peter and family, GOLDENEYE (© Peter Lamont)

names. He was always ready for a laugh. We did the boat chase and the airplane chase for *Live and Let Die*; he was always up for a bit of fun. After Roger it was going to be Pierce but he was doing *Remington Steele* for American TV; we found out that his contract was up but if they could fund any more episodes within fifty-six days he could be liable to fulfil the contract. So they did five more episodes and the edict from Cubby was 'Remington Steele will not be James Bond.' That's where Timothy Dalton came in and he was great. He's one of those 'What are my motivation?' actors but he did a very good job, he was a different sort of character, more grounded when perhaps the audience wasn't quite ready for that yet.

**It's fair to say that you were instrumental in the development of the original famous 007 Stage at Pinewood that was created to house Ken's supertanker designs for *The Spy Who Loved Me*.**

I went up to look at some airship hangars, one of which was used by a fire company who would set fires and put 'em out. The other hangar was the Royal Air Force's and they used it for barrage balloons but it was in a sad state - I think it's all been renovated now. We were told that if we went there we'd have to do everything with copper face tools, as if we caught a spark the bloody lot would go up because of the hydrogen! Ken had been looking at other options and in the end it was decided to make a temporary building in Pinewood for which they had to get planning permission and they built the 007 stage. It took thirteen weeks to build and the film set was being built inside as we were building the exterior. I signed off on the design of the building. Of course, it's now in its third incarnation because the original and its replacement were destroyed by fire.

**Your continued involvement with Bond – by the time of *For Your Eyes Only* in 1981 you were Production Designer – must have taken you all around the world.**

I've been out to the Bahamas several times, not only for *Thunderball* but also for *The Spy Who Loved Me* and for *Casino Royale*, the last one I did. I went to Egypt for *Spy*,

India, Nepal, Goa and Berlin for *Octopussy*, over to America and Paris for *A View to a Kill*, *The World Is Not Enough* in Turkey and Azerbaijan and for *Casino Royale* we went to South Africa and Mozambique. For *Moonraker*, we went to see the space shuttle Columbia being built. We went along in stretch limousines and people were more interested in us in our stretch limousines than this real working reusable spaceship that was in front of them! Bond has taken me all around the world and back again more than once.

**Your fruitful working relationship with James Cameron from the 1980s interrupted your run on the Bond movies when you missed out on *Tomorrow Never Dies* in 1997 because of a film about a famous maritime disaster which did quite well and earned you your long-awaited Oscar for Production Design. But you returned to Bond for the new era with Daniel Craig in *Casino Royale*. What do you think of Daniel's take on Bond and what are your views on the subsequent entries in the series?**

Daniel was obviously the right choice because you can't have a young man if he's already a full Commander, as you don't become a Commander in the Navy when

you're 21 so he was fine. I think he was excellent. *Casino Royale* was a good movie. I didn't like *Quantum*—that one just didn't work. I liked *Skyfall*, they pulled that one off well. I loved the first sequence in *SPECTRE* but felt it was too long and too dark.

**Looking back over your career, what would you say are your proudest and happiest moments?**

I loved working with Jim and it was wonderful to win an Oscar for *Titanic* but on the other hand, I love Bond and Barbara, Cubby and now Michael G. Wilson have been lovely to work with. I never made a telephone call or sent a memo, I always went to see them and their response was always 'Oh Christ, he wants to build another set!' The secret is to make the effort and go and talk to people. But it's all been a wonderful experience and I'm proud that when I gave it up I went out on a high with *Casino Royale*, which relaunched Bond, as it's a film that everyone seems to really like.

**THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN EYE: DESIGNING THE JAMES BOND FILMS** by Peter Lamont and Marcus Hearn is published on November 1st by Signum books.



Peter in Mexico, LICENCE TO KILL (© Eon Productions)



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# REVIEWS

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AND RATED



## TROLLS

CERT: U / DIRECTORS: MIKE MITCHELL, WALT DOHRN / SCREENPLAY: JONATHAN AIBEL, GLENN BERGER / STARRING: ANNA KENDRICK, ZOOEY DESCHANEL, JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE, JEFFREY TAMBOR / RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 21ST

Glitter farts, pooping cupcakes, scrapbooks, singing and sparkling rainbows. Trolls is surprisingly not as cringe-worthy as all that sounds... even to those of us blessed or depressed with a healthy dose of cynicism. If the exasperating first half of this film based on the cutesy toy range is a chore to get through, it might just thaw some stone cold hearts by the time Justin Timberlake starts belting out tunes by the end.

And thank God for Justin Timberlake, because without his character in Trolls, this movie would be completely insufferable. Timberlake's Branch is the only Troll with an understandable sense of unease that dreaded monsters the Bergens are desperate to find the eye-poppingly bright community of trolls living blissfully carefree in the woods. Twenty years earlier, the Trolls escaped the clutches of the Bergens, who are such a bunch of miserable creatures that they can only find happiness when they eat the multicoloured-haired Trolls. Branch warns his fellow trolls not to have parties full of loud singing and glittery fireworks, but will the irrepressible Princess Poppy and the other trolls listen?

No, they bloody won't, the annoying little buggers. No wonder Branch is miserable and hiding in a hole in the ground. So when

the Bergen head chef finds the trolls and carries some off to Bergen town to turn into tasty treats, Poppy must enlist Branch to help her in rescuing her friends so that they don't miss out on anymore scheduled hugs times, singing, dancing, and lest we forget... scrapbooking.

While much of the movie is frustratingly filled with infuriating pop songs belted out by Anna Kendrick while she refuses to see the danger all around her, it eventually gets darker and far more interesting once the mismatched pair reaches Bergen town. Looking like something Laika would lovingly animate in stop-motion, Bergen town injects some much-needed darkness and ugliness into proceedings. It's here where eventually the character arcs some reap rewards with both Branch lightening up and Poppy losing a little of her of teeth-grinding peppiness.

Just in case you don't realise where this is heading, remember that the only troll with any emotions other than happy is played by Justin 'Can't Stop the Feeling' Timberlake. The voice casting isn't subtle and Anna Kendrick is almost unbearable for much of the film, but Russell Brand gets a few laughs mocking his own persona as a spiritual hippy Troll.

But the real spark in Trolls comes not in its bright colours, rap-infused pop songs or occasional bursts of inventive action. What it eventually delivers is a potent message about popping medication in your mouth to make you happy. The Bergens believe that eating a Troll is the only way to happiness, whereas the trolls have regularly scheduled hugging breaks. If that sounds too saccharine or simplistic, steer well clear of Trolls. If on the other hand, you think you can get through Princess Poppy's constant penchant for breaking into song, you might just find something to enjoy beneath the motivation to sell some little plastic toys with big multi-coloured hair.

If nothing else, Trolls manages the incredible feat of making the annoyingly talented Justin Timberlake, not only pretty ugly but also easily the most likeable character in a movie that could drown in its own irritating positivity.

PETE TURNER

EXPECTED ★★★★★ 5

ACTUAL ★★★★★ 6





### MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

**CERT: 12A / DIRECTOR: TIM BURTON / SCREENPLAY: JANE GOLDMAN / STARRING: EVA GREEN, ASA BUTTERFIELD, CHRIS O'DOWD, JUDI DENCH, SAMUEL L. JACKSON / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

First thing's first, this isn't Tim Burton's next classic. It's as visually sumptuous as we've come to expect from Burton, but a messy, overstuffed narrative, which provides nothing more than a mildly entertaining encounter, taints it.

When his oddball grandfather (Terence Stamp) passes away in mysterious circumstances, Californian introvert Jake Portman (Butterfield) travels to Wales for answers. Soon enough, Jake discovers an extraordinary orphanage his grandfather had

claimed to have lived in via a time loop, which transports him from 2016 to 1943. There, he befriends the specially gifted children of the orphanage and their guardian Miss Peregrine (Green), a 'Ymbryne', a rare type of peculiar who has the ability to transform into a bird as well as create time loops. These loops keep the children safe in a single continually repeating day. However, the children's safe haven is under threat by the shape-shifting Mr Barron (Jackson) and his entourage of faceless, tentacled, long-

limbed hollowgasts, who have an unquenchable hunger for peculiars' eyeballs.

It should be perfectly suited to Burton's eccentric style, but his trademark oddity feels surprisingly dialled down and restricted by a surplus of exposition. Screenwriter Goldman attempts to cram a lot of ideas and details into the narrative but the film is frequently bogged down by hefty moments of exposition dumping and by an uncertain, meandering storyline. Consequently, it never quite connects and it's hard to feel properly engaged. This is exacerbated by a confused handling of the time loops, making it difficult to keep up with things!

The film is at its best when focusing on the intriguing, unique children and the exchanges between them. Each is vividly brought to life, from a young girl with hidden gnashers at the back of her head to a girl lighter than air who wears weighted boots to stop her floating away. They're a suitably kooky, uncanny bunch that cause Jake to appear

as a rather bland hero, unfortunately, despite the best efforts of Butterfield. Green emerges as the real star of the show, putting in an impressively quirky, absorbing and layered performance as the children's crossbow-wielding guardian. Jackson also has a blast as the deliciously wicked, eyeball-devouring villain and together the pair deliver enough alluring character moments to keep the film afloat.

Unsurprisingly, this fantastical world is brought to life with marvellous wonder and aplomb. The hollowgasts' design is particularly effective with their genuinely unsettling facelessness and terrifying tentacled mouths. Altogether, it's very much a stop and go affair in which Burton has successfully crafted some interesting characters and memorable images, but fails to place them into the coherent, concise narrative they deserve.

LUKE CHANNELL

EXPECTED ++++++ 7

ACTUAL ++++++ 5



### BLAIR WITCH

**CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR: ADAM WINGARD / SCREENPLAY: SIMON BARRETT / STARRING: JAMES ALLEN MCCUNE, CALLIE HERNANDEZ, CORBIN REID, BRANDON SCOTT, WES ROBINSON / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

If you are the sort of vacuous, chin-stroking individual that thought The Blair Witch Project was a masterclass of modern filmmaking, then you need to hunt around for an alternative review of this "movie experience". If you are right-minded, and can actually see the wood for those trees, then we can only strongly recommend that you find something better to do with your free time than catching up with this "sequel".

Blair Witch is a cinematic headlong dive into a cesspit, without even the distraction of a forward triple somersault. The Blair Witch Project was probably the most overrated horror flick ever made, a one-trick found

footage pony that ejaculated its finishing scene in the first five minutes of its runtime. A badly made movie artificially elevated to cult status by a viral Internet campaign powered by moronic hipsters. Yet, in a masterstroke, Blair Witch has actually managed to waste five million dollars on an updated embarrassment that might actually be worse...

In an almost virtual rerun of the original, a bunch of similar half-wits set off to uncover the fate of the snotty-nosed girl from the original. The link is provided by character James (the brother of the snot fetish queen), played in pay cheque-grasping mode by

James Allen McCune. While he is fairly competent, the rest of the cast are pretty much a disaster, the lack of acting talent rendering any later plot reveals mute as you had already figured everything out from their ham-fisted attempts at subtle foreshadowing. Most of them act like seven-year-olds in a school play just biding their time waiting for their *moment*. We felt sorry for Callie Hernandez who was the only person who could form facial expressions and reactions in sync with the actual events unfolding around them.

We say unfolding, but that is a misleading comment, as the experience is just a disorientating mess designed seemingly as ammo for chin-strokers to use whilst lording it over casual moviegoers, with their protestations that they get the genius of it all. In reality it's just a mess of cut scenes, flashes, vague imagery (that won't be vague once everyone downloads the tormented version and starts with the screen capping!), running scenes, and bushes. It's the original with a five-million-dollar budget, and a one-thousand-dollar drone. Obviously, the drone was meant to enforce the passage of time.

Although to be fair we would suggest you contact director Adam Wingard and find out the model of this bad boy drone as its battery lasts for days, not the standard 75 minutes. As for Wingard, we loved The Guest, and even had a lot of time for V/H/S, so this is a disappointment on an epic level.

There is one interesting idea - just one! The passage of time seems to exist on another plane in the woods. This is quickly jettisoned to make way for a load of running, screaming, and torch beam porn. Ultimately you would be expecting this to lead somewhere, and build upon the ending of the original movie, whilst expanding the mythology. Don't hold your breath.

Blair Witch is another Emperor's new suit of clothes, sadly made from the same material (faeces).

Avoid this film at all costs. If you later find that any of your friends or family actually liked this movie, then we suggest you disassociate yourself from them, and avoid them at all costs too, as they will only disappoint you somewhere down the line.

JORDAN ROYCE

EXPECTED ++++++ 6

ACTUAL ++++++ 1





## THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS

**CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR: COLM MCCARTHY / SCREENPLAY: M. R. CAREY / STARRING: GEMMA ARTERTON, PADDY CONSIDINE, GLENN CLOSE, SENNIA NANUA / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Twenty or so minutes into *The Girl with All the Gifts* and Glenn Close is thrusting scissors into the skulls of a couple of ravenous, blood-crazed 'hungries' (aka zombies) who have had the temerity to break into her military research facility and take a chunk out of her lab assistant. That's not something you see every day in the movies. Six-time Academy Award nominee Glenn Close, more recently on sizzling form as superbitch lawyer Patty Hewes in five seasons of TV's *Damages*, taking on the living dead in post-apocalyptic Britain. What's the world coming to?

Or rather, where's the world going? To Hell in a handcart, according to *The Girl with All the Gifts*, adapted by M. R. Carey from his acclaimed novel. It might seem like faint praise but this is the best British 'zombie' movie since *28 Days Later* and, in its own way, it's as visually arresting, disturbing and powerful as Danny Boyle's 2002 game-changer. But in truth, *TGWATG* (as it shall be henceforth known) is darker, bleaker and considerably more apocalyptic than most entries into its genre. This ain't no date night/feel good/holding hands movie, boys and girls. We're ten years into a terrible fungus-like viral infection which has spread across the UK (and, we can only assume, the world) and humanity is sliding towards extinction. The infected have become flesh-eating savages, but a tiny military enclave in the English countryside is conducting hideous experiments on young children who carry the virus, exhibit cannibalistic tendencies and yet have sentience and intelligence. Dr. Caldwell (Close) is on the verge of synthesising a vaccine but when the facility is overrun, she and a few survivors

– Paddy Considine's hard-nosed soldier Sgt. Parkes, kindly teacher Dr. Justineau (Gemma Arterton), a rather special young girl called Melanie (Sennia Nanua) amongst them – flee across hostile countryside and venture into a deserted London crumbling back into the arms of Nature in search of sanctuary and the means for Dr. Caldwell to complete her work.

Brittle and brutal and yet shot through with a knowing vein of black humour, *TGWATG* is a gripping and intelligent thriller in which the 'hungries' are the least of mankind's problems, set against a terrifying and ingeniously crafted threat which is slowly spreading its tentacles across the face of a decaying planet. Despite its stellar adult cast, the film is really all about young newcomer Sennia Nanua, whose frankly stunning performance effortlessly captures both Melanie's humanity and her inhumanity to the extent that we're never sure whether we should fall in love with her fresh-faced innocence or fear the monster inside which is never far away from the surface. Gemma Arterton suffers for her art in an unflattering jumper and shapeless combat fatigues, her humanist teacher Dr. Justineau losing her dramatic imperative as the group find themselves sequestered in an overgrown London (beautifully subtle visual effects creating some hauntingly memorable images of a city long-lost to civilisation), and Paddy Considine is solidly four-square as the no-nonsense matter-of-fact soldier struggling against impossible odds to keep the group together.

*TGWATG* is peppered with the sort of fast-paced action sequences and moments of high drama and jeopardy we might

expect from what we could lazily describe as a 'zombie' movie, but this is as much a cerebral, contemplative experience as it is a balls-to-the-wall end-of-the-world horror movie. This is, to roll out an all-too-familiar genre cliché, a film which asks us to think about what it means to be human and yet also what humanity really is. Director Colm McCarthy (his CV is virtually a 'best of' list of recent British TV drama) has crafted a mature, sophisticated, occasionally shocking but always captivating apocalyptic drama which, in the end, is both grimly, determinedly downbeat and yet oddly uplifting and optimistic. *The Girl with All the Gifts* tells us that life will always prevail – in one form or another. A majestic experience.

PAUL MOUNT

EXPECTED ★★★★★★★★ 7

ACTUAL ★★★★★★★★★★ 9





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REVIEWED & RATED

# REVIEWS



## WOLF CREEK: THE COMPLETE 1ST SERIES

DVD + BD / CERT: 18 / DIRECTOR: GREG MCLEAN, TONY TILSE / SCREENPLAY: PETER GAWLER, GREG MCLEAN, FELICITY PACKARD / STARRING: JOHN JARRATT, LUCY FRY, DUSTIN CLARE, ANDY MCPHEE, JESSICA TOVEY / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Greg McLean's 2005 *Wolf Creek* certainly made a splash upon its arrival, thrusting the vicious, maniacal Mick Taylor (John Jarratt) and his penchant for butchering tourists into the hearts of many a horror hound. A slightly disappointing sequel followed in 2013, but now Mick's back with his own mini-series... although things may not be going all his way this time out.

Much like we've seen in the two movies, this six-episode affair sees Mick patrolling the Australian outback looking to indulge in his favourite pastime – slaughtering tourists. And as luck would have it, the terrifying Taylor happens across an American family who have made the ill-judged decision to pull up in the outback to take in some of the charms of Australia's desolate landscape. In typical Mick Taylor fashion, it doesn't take long for this family to meet their maker as Mick dispatches them in a matter of seconds. That is, however, apart from the troubled teenage daughter of the group, Eve (Lucy Fry). Managing to just about survive the attack that left the rest of her family dead, Eve now has one thing on her mind: revenge.

To describe it in the simplest of terms, the *Wolf Creek* mini-series is essentially a six-hour revenge story as we see the tables turned and the hunter become the hunted. In Eve, we

see a journey from traumatised victim to somebody who is fearless once the realisation hits home that she has nothing else to lose. Along the way, of course, there are plenty of faces who pop up – some to aid her, some to cause her further torment – but the endgame is simply to find Mick Taylor and exact some cold-blooded revenge for the death of her family. As ever, though, Mick is at the top of his game and won't be making it easy for Eve.

In this mini-series, we've been given something that is truly stunning to view; the desolate, vacuous feel of the outback is a pleasure to take in, with the delightful cinematography and direction likely to leave you feeling as if you're actually coming down with heatstroke. Added to this, the score from Burkhard von Dallwitz only furthers the feeling of desperation and desolation that drips over *Wolf Creek* like a dirty, sweaty rag. But at its core, *Wolf Creek* is about the storytelling and the performances.

As Eve, Lucy Fry brings a multi-layered performance that's a true joy to behold. This is a character who is dealing with immense guilt – it was her drug addiction that saw her family decide to embark on an Australian vacation – and remorse, yet she soon comes to realise that her life now has a new purpose: to exact revenge for

the atrocity dealt out to her and her family. From a timid victim who sees the menacing memory of Mick Taylor at every turn, to a balls-to-the-wall shit-kicking survivor, Fry dazzles and marks herself out as a talent to keep an eye on. And in all of this, she's helped out and guided by Sullivan Hill (Dustin Clare), a cop who has Eve's best interests in mind but who also has his own wish to take down the monster who has slaughtered so many in the Australian outback. Then there's the brutal murderer himself, with John Jarratt on ever-boisterous form as the calculating, abusive and clinical Mick, again making the character seem like a well-tanned, grizzled Freddy Krueger in how he takes such pleasure in what he does.

*Wolf Creek* may drag just a tad during its middle, with the story at that time feeling like it maybe doesn't warrant six whole episodes, but the tension and carnage is soon picked up as the mini-series goes headlong into its conclusion – and in fairness, the slower-paced second and third episodes actually feel warranted in hindsight when looking back at the series as a whole.

Whilst many felt that *Wolf Creek 2* was a step down for the *Wolf Creek* franchise, this six-episode mini-series is a bloody, brutal, rip-roaring return to form.

**Extras:** Six featurettes

ANDREW POLLARD

★★★★★★★★★ 8



DVD & BLU-RAY

STARBURST





### MATINEE (1993)

BD / CERT: PG / DIRECTOR: JOE DANTE / SCREENPLAY: CHARLES S. HAAS / STARRING: JOHN GOODMAN, SIMON FENTON, CATHY MORIARTY / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

'Half man... half ant... all terror!' That's the tagline not to Joe Dante's *Matinee* but to *Mant!*, the schlocky film-within-a-film produced by John Goodman's cigar-chomping Lawrence Woolsey. Woolsey's films may be far from masterpieces, but he likes to put on a good show, and for the screening of *Mant!* in Key West, Florida, he's pulling out all the stops, including hiring a man dressed

as the eponymous ant monster to spook viewers and installing electric shock devices in the chairs, not to mention his 'rumble-rama' that will simulate the film's nuclear explosion. The problem is, this is October 1962, and not far away from Key West, the Cuban Missile Crisis is threatening to tear the world apart – which Woolsey sees as an opportunity to draw on his audience's fears.

It's not Woolsey, however, but Simon Fenton's Gene who's the protagonist. Gene's dad is on one of the submarines near Cuba and so the fear is very personal for him; a fear he tries to get away from through his love of horror movies. Following Gene and his friends in the build-up to the *Mant!* screening, and then the show itself as it goes as out of control as you'd expect, *Matinee* is a fast-paced and very funny farce, with broad, daft humour aimed at a family audience. Though its plot threads intertwine nicely, Charlie Haas' script does throw in one heightened side character too many, meaning that the love story between Gene and his date Sandra (Lisa Jakub) doesn't get time to develop.

It's also a film filled with nostalgia; just as recent Netflix hit *Stranger Things* saw the Duffer Brothers pastiche the sci-fi films they loved as kids, this is Joe Dante paying tribute to his favourite childhood movies, albeit through comedy rather than straight-up imitation. And though John Goodman's long monologues on the magic of cinema can

get a little bit too much, the warmth of Dante's affection for this genre shines through in the upbeat tone, particularly when we get to see scenes from *Mant!*. It perfectly tears apart the tropes of that genre, from the shrieking women to the patronising scientist: "now he'll grow at an accelerated – or speeded up – rate". Even better, the whole sixteen-minute *Mant!* is included as an extra on this Blu-ray.

And that's worth watching, because *Mant!* is a hilarious and entertaining watch made with charm and affection – just like *Matinee*. It's not perfect, but it's perhaps Dante's most personal film and definitely an underacknowledged gem. This new Blu-ray release comes courtesy of Arrow, who've done as good a job as ever, so now would be a great time to add *Matinee* to your collection.

**Extras:** *Mant!* / Making-of / On-set Footage / Discussion with Joe Dante / Deleted Scenes / Trailer

KIERON MOORE

★★★★★★★★★★ 8



### THE A-TEAM - COMPLETE COLLECTION

BD / CERT: 12 / DIRECTORS: VARIOUS / SCREENWRITERS: VARIOUS / STARRING: GEORGE PEPPARD, DIRK BENEDICT, DWIGHT SCHULTZ, MR T / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Nostalgia can be a fickle mistress. Anyone old enough to remember the original run of *The A-Team* will have fond memories of Saturday evenings spent in front of the television.

We'd wait to find out which poor, desperate individual tried to hire the self-exiled soldiers of fortune – seriously, anyone on the street seemed to be able to

find them, but the army was always one step behind – and why. Then we'd watch as Hannibal, Face, Murdock, and B.A. ran through a gamut of moralistic stories, only to come out the other end relatively unscathed as they helped the helpless.

We now find ourselves in a rich era of television, where networks are prepared

to allow screenwriters to create a slow-burn story arc that could end up reaching over numerous series. Those networks are also willing to push the boundaries of what we can expect to see on these shows. This wasn't really possible with syndicated shows in the past. Turn back to the '80s and *The A-Team* and shows of its ilk are the simple cousins by comparison. The episodes were family friendly – remember that considering the amount of ammo and explosives used in each episode, no one ever died, honestly, stormtroopers would have felt right at home on set – and helped parents and kids alike suspend disbelief just long enough to entrust that four men could create an armoured tank out of a lawnmower, some metal plating, and a potato gun. Every week.

There are only a couple of extras within this set; an interesting look back at '80s television as a whole, as well as a short interview with the series creator, the late Stephen J. Cannell. It looks

like these have been made available elsewhere before though, so there's nothing new on show.

The transfers of the episodes onto Blu-ray are as clean as they could be and look crisp, but with only those two extras, no episode commentaries, or new interviews with any surviving cast or crew, the price may make all but the most diehard fan balk at upgrading their DVD sets.

That said, if you loved the series the first time around, this'll bring back some really happy memories, as the camaraderie is all still there.

JD GILLAM

★★★★★★★★★★ 7







## THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX (1965)

BD / CERT: PG / DIRECTOR: ROBERT ALDRICH / SCREENPLAY: LUKAS HELLER / STARRING: JAMES STEWART, RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH, HARDY KRÜGER, PETER FINCH, ERNEST BORGNINE / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

In these days of advanced communication, GPS and satellites, it's hard to remember that there was a time when a plane getting stranded in the middle of nowhere was such a fear it became part of popular culture. There were a couple of real horror stories of planes downed in WWII in remote parts. The vine-covered Hellcat with a skeleton in the cockpit became a common trope right up to the '70s. The desert crash had particularly gripped the public consciousness after a perfectly preserved B-24 bomber, The

Lady Be Good, was found in the Libyan Desert in 1958, fifteen years after it had been assumed to have ditched in the sea. It was another two years before they found the remains of the crew who walked miles before the desert claimed them. The fate of the Lady Be Good inspired several stories including Elleston Trevor's 1964 novel, *The Flight of the Phoenix*, and its subsequent movie adaptation. It's a lot harder to get lost nowadays, so you can't make movies like this any more and for the purposes of this paragraph, please ignore

the fact it was re-made in 2004.

A cargo plane full of A-list and Z-list actors gets caught in a sandstorm and one of its two engines is knocked out. The experienced but aging pilot (James Stewart) puts them down with only a few casualties amongst the Z-listers, but the plane is going nowhere. The alcoholic co-pilot (Richard Attenborough) failed to make sure the radio was working and no-one knows they're there. With the nearest oasis over a hundred miles away (if they could even find it), they're screwed. There's character conflict, a doomed attempt at getting away, but sooner or later they're going to have to listen to the world's most German German (Hardy Krüger – the go-to German in 1965), a passenger who, as luck would have it, is an aircraft designer. He reckons there's enough left of the plane to build a new one and fly to safety. Is he mad? Well, they've got nothing to lose...

Phoenix is an undoubted classic. It's been called an engineer's film (and the resultant 'Phoenix' is both impressive and believable) but things like this are always

going to be about the characters so it's nice to see the heavyweights in good form. A few are a bit underdeveloped (surprisingly, George Kennedy and Ian Bannen) but there's a wonderfully difficult relationship between a British army officer (Peter Finch) and his sergeant (Ronald Fraser in career-best form). The overbearing officer thinks his sergeant is the salt of the earth but that feeling is not reciprocated. Subject of which, this is a movie that boasts some of the most memorable moments on celluloid. The officer marching off to find that oasis: will he just walk in a big circle? Of course he does and guess who finds him? The 'twist' scene: utterly brilliant but we're not going to ruin it. And the engine-starting climax is quite possibly the tensest scene in cinema.

It's nearly perfect and it's definitely essential.

**Extras:** Interview with film historian Sheldon Hall / Trailer / Booklet

JOHN KNOTT

★★★★★★★★★★ 9



## DEAD END DRIVE-IN (1986)

DVD + BD / CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR: BRIAN TRENCHARD-SMITH / SCREENPLAY: PETER SMALLEY / STARRING: NED MANNING, NATALIE MCCURRY, PETER WHITFORD, WILBUR WILDE / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

As 1986's *Dead End Drive-In* begins, we're told that just a few years later in the '90s the world has gone to hell, the economy is in ruins, food is scarce and crime is rampant. Gangs drive the streets, fighting each other and salvage crews for the 'rewards' of things like car parts after accidents. In an effort to curb crime, the police and the owners of some drive-ins conspire to trap

unemployed young people, then give them easy access to food, drugs, booze, crappy movies and music. In short, everything they need to keep entertained, accept their fate and not try to escape. Crabs is the charming nickname given to Jimmy, who opens the movie engaging in some risky jogging (maybe it's a thing in the crime-ridden future, we'll probably know soon enough). Crabs is a pretty

simple guy - he just wants to keep fit, make some money and, uh, get to know his girlfriend, Carmen. So he 'borrows' his brother's beloved '56 Chevy and decides to take Carmen to the drive-in. And get in with two tickets on the 'unemployed' rate. It's not long before his car has fewer wheels than needed to drive home. Stranded at the drive-in, the owner tells Crabs and Carmen not to expect to leave any time soon. Carmen settles into the new world pretty quickly but Crabs just wants to get back to his life outside the electrified fences that surround them.

Made during the peak of Ozploitation flicks, *Dead End Drive-In* takes inspiration from many of the post-apocalyptic genre films around in the late '70s and '80s, especially the homegrown *Mad Max* series. A similarly low budget film, it's got a great done-on-the-cheap production design that helps build a sense of heightened reality. The premise might be pretty much flimsy nonsense but the slum of the drive-in is beautifully realised and feels convincingly lived in. Social

commentary abounds in this microcosm of society of the time too, on race, consumerism, the way people can be conned into thinking what they've got is good, even the evils of fast food. It might not be subtle satire on the contemporary culture, but it's not done with a sledgehammer either and doesn't get in the way of a good time.

We could argue not much happens for a long time after Crabs and Carmen get to the drive-in, with director Brian Trenchard-Smith seemingly saving his meagre money for explosive stunt set-pieces at the end. It's intensely 1980s as well, which is apparently not everyone's thing, so be warned. The acting is fine, though sometimes we imagine this could have been what a *Very Special Episode* of *Heartbreak High* about dropping acid could have been like. These are generally very minor points, though, in what's for the most part a hugely fun and entertaining minor genre gem.

JAMES EVANS

★★★★★★★★★★ 8





## CLOWNTOWN

DVD / CERT: 18 / DIRECTOR: TOM NAGEL / SCREENPLAY: JEFF MILLER / STARRING: BRIAN NAGEL, LAUREN ELISE, ANDREW STATON / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

We open at the Strode household, where a cute young babysitter is telling her doe-eyed wards a scary story before bedtime. With the little ones shipped off to bed, the babysitter begins to unwind (read: get naked). But what's this? Standing before her, one of the children – dressed in a clown costume. The babysitter is promptly murdered. And yet somehow, we are not watching Halloween,

the Halloween remake or a Halloween sequel. Nope, this is the opening of *ClownTown*, which is more beholden to the slasher classic than even its own remakes or sequels.

Meanwhile, on their way to a country music gig, four pretty young things find themselves stranded in a small rural town after one of the girls loses her mobile phone. They aren't as alone as it first seems –

attacked and hunted by a gang of armed, murderous clowns, the two couples face a desperate, brutal fight for their lives. Which also happens to be the gist of Rob Zombie's latest *Hillbilly- 'em-up*, 31. But we're not watching that, either.

The Carpenter influence is strong throughout; it's an action-based horror film that recalls the machinations of *Assault on Precinct 13* and *Escape from New York*. It's unfortunate that the film's release comes so close to that of *Zombie's* 31 though, because, in spite of its flaws, it is a vastly superior film. For while 31 is very much of the Rob Zombie playbook, chock full of the director's tics and habits, this more workmanlike effort has less baggage and is more concerned with simply being an effective horror film. Where 31's heroes are grubby, annoying hicks, *ClownTown's* are simple but likeable. Where *Zombie's* clowns are too gross and dirty to look like clowns (barely a full tub of greasepaint among them), these actually look the part and, a result far more terrifying. Authentic,

inappropriately happy clowns will *always* be more unsettling than those actually designed to look scary. Nothing is less bleeding scary than a clown actively trying to be scary.

It seems perverse to reward *ClownTown* for having less of a directorial stamp than the singularly auteur-driven 31, but here we are: the action is coherent and fun, the characters clean and relatable (if irritating, in some of the most grating shrieking since Sally Hardesty in *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*). The scares and gore largely work, and the clowns actually look scary, but when the action is at its peak, you'll scarcely notice.

*ClownTown* is a fun, nasty, low-budget little horror romp that delivers exactly on its promise – terrifying murder clowns running amok in small town America. It doesn't really deserve to be, but it's the best *Innocents vs Murder Clowns* movie you'll see this year.

JOEL HARLEY

★★★★★★★★★ 7



## PSYCHOMANIA (1973)

DUAL / CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR: DON SHARP / SCREENPLAY: ARNAUD D'USSEAU, JUILAN ZIMET / STARRING: NICKY HENSON, MARY LARKIN, BERYL REID, GEORGE SANDERS, ANN MICHELLE, ROY HOLDER, DENIS GILMORE, MILES GREENWOOD, ROBERT HARDY / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Oh yes, *STARBURST* does cult and they don't come much more cult than this. Just to get that early '70s vibe, let's imagine (the slightly terrifying prospect of) sitting in a darkened room listening to Black Sabbath's seminal *Paranoid* album. What are we visualising? Stone Circles? Séances? Motorbikes? Bringing down the establishment? Coming back from the dead through force of will alone? Knocking over parking cones in Hepworth Way shopping centre? Well with *Psychomania* (which

was recently screened at the inaugural *STARBURST* International Film Festival), we get all this and more. They don't make them like this anymore and, if we're honest, they never really did.

Tom (Nicky Henson) is the leader of a biker gang called 'The Living Dead' (of course they are) who like riding round a stone circle in the rather eerie opening titles. But they also like to 'blow people's minds', which largely involves running them off the road with fatal consequences. So far, they're not clocking-up

the audience sympathy and Tom gets rid of any you may have had when we find out he's a posh boy whose mother (Beryl Reid) does séances and even has a butler (George Sanders in his last movie). But there's some kind of devilry going on as there's a locked room where Tom's father died and more talk of resurrection than is normal in most households. The trick is to simply *believe* you'll come back. It may also involve frogs but the film's sketchy on that front. Suffice to say, after a bit of cone-related shopping centre aggro, Tom 'does a ton' and deliberately drives off a motorway bridge. The gang bury him on his bike (the hole isn't quite deep enough but hang in there) while playing sub-Donovan folk songs, and he brilliantly comes back to life by bursting out of the grave like a low-rent *Ghost Rider* (without the expensive skull-motif or flames). Then he kills someone trying to repair one of the movie's many Morris Minors. The gang are so impressed that they all commit suicide in various unlikely ways and continue to run murderously amok among the Morris Minor-filled roads of the local countryside. Only Tom's girlfriend Amy (Mary Larkin) resists.

On paper *Psychomania* ought

to be a stinker. The plot is silly, the character's motivations incomprehensible (coming back from the dead we get, but why all the murders?) and it isn't in the slightest bit frightening: the bikers come back from the dead looking and talking exactly as if nothing happened and any attempts at portraying even mild peril are hamstrung by the whole British homeliness of it all. Even the motorbikes look like they're about to fall apart (and are most definitely not the Harleys the original script intended). But *Psychomania* is just great fun. Director Don Sharp was no mug but you can't help the feeling it's great by accident; its uniqueness allowing it to ooze singular charm. According to legend, George Sanders committed suicide straight after watching the movie's preview. We hope that's not true, because *Psychomania* is a bona fide cult classic.

**Extras:** Eight interviews and documentaries / Trivia track / Trailer / Booklet

JOHN KNOTT

★★★★★★★★★ 8





## **DARK MATTER: SEASON TWO**

**DVD / CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR & SCREENPLAY: VARIOUS / STARRING: ZOIE PALMER, JODELLE FERLAND, MARC BENDAVID, ANTHONY LEMKE, MELISSA O'NEIL / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

These days, both Marvel and DC Comics dominate the TV market thanks to the likes of Jessica Jones, Daredevil, Arrow and The Flash, yet the only big sci-fi show still going strong is, of course, Doctor Who. Then out of the blue on the Syfy channel, Dark Matter arrives, having also began life as a comic book series produced by Dark Horse, and even though it did borrow familiar elements from shows even the most casual of sci-fi fans would recognise (Firefly, Blake's 7, etc.), it was a show that ultimately proved to be popular with audiences. Season 1 managed to establish its characters and the universe they inhabited, and Season

2, hits the ground running following the shock twist at the end of last series.

The stakes here are much higher than before, both on an epic and personal level. Throughout the series, we are constantly teased about an impending war between the major corporations that will rise, as well as another betrayal from within the core team, which doesn't come into play until the final two episodes. Granted, there are contrivances to be found, sorely as a means of getting from point A to point B, but the writing here is still as strong as before. Plus, it certainly doesn't chicken out of its conclusion, which is probably more gut-wrenching than the

previous series' suckerpunch finale. The characters grow and continue to have strong development along with compelling motivations driving them, which goes to show how far they have come from the stiff archetypes they started out as from the very beginning. Like the first season, this series does a commendable job of giving lingering attention to each and every character's backstory, fleshing them out and making each one dynamic in their own way.

The series cleverly creates stories with this in mind, including the Android starting to develop human qualities (as well as craving for Hot Chocolate), Four wanting to help his people, Six coming to conflict with both loyalties and ideologies and Two trying to escape a near-death situation involving her nanites. This season sees the shocking departure of One, and in his place are two new characters in Devon and Nyx; Devon is ultimately one-dimensional, bland and serves no purpose to the plot whatsoever, neither does he make any impact in the slightest. As for Nyx, well, Melanie Liburd is solid in the role, but her character is... there. Not terrible by any means, she's just... like we say... there.

The original six cast members still do a great job

in their respective roles; Zoie Palmer is especially fantastic as the Android, still managing to pull off the machine AI side convincingly, whilst also being very endearing with a subtle dose of humour coming through. Melissa O'Neil is also terrific as Two, giving off a real, strong commanding presence, whilst Jodelle Ferland brilliantly conveys both vulnerability and quirkiness as the adorable Five. Anthony Lemke is still a riot as Three, and both Roger Cross and Alex Mallari Jr. still do solid jobs as both Six and Four.

Usually, following seasons can never live up to the first, but here, Season 2 manages to stand alongside its predecessor strongly and proudly. The original characters evolve and mature throughout this season, clarity and depth is given to ongoing storylines as well as new ones, and the theme of change is present throughout with the status quo occasionally shaken up. It'll certainly be interesting to see where the story goes following that finale, but it's clear that a big future is in store for our ragtag team of antiheroes, and that's good enough reason to get excited.

RYAN POLLARD

★★★★★★★★★★ 8



## **BOWFINGER (1999)**

**BD / CERT: 12 / DIRECTOR: FRANK OZ / SCREENPLAY: STEVE MARTIN / STARRING: STEVE MARTIN, EDDIE MURPHY, HEATHER GRAHAM, CHRISTINE BARANSKI / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

From The Producers to The Player, there's no target Hollywood loves to satirise more than itself. This 1999 comedy, now being released on Blu-ray, is no exception, poking fun at everything going on in the film industry of its time through the story of Bobby Bowfinger, an enthusiastic but penniless film producer.

Bowfinger (Steve Martin, who also scripted the film)

will stop at nothing to get his alien invasion movie made, even when the star he wants, Kit Ramsey (Eddie Murphy) flat out rejects him. His idea is to have Ramsey star in the movie without knowing he's in it – by following him around with a hidden camera and having the rest of their cast walk up to him in the street and act out their scenes. The thing is, Ramsey's already the

paranoid kind, being a member of a Scientology-esque organisation called MindHead, and this scheme only further convinces the star that aliens are after him.

It's a great premise, and one that plays out in very entertaining fashion, with some clever satire at the cults of both celebrity and Scientology mixed in with the surreal and zingy dialogue you'd expect from a Steve Martin script; "she had the personality of a ZIP code in Kansas", Bowfinger says of a failed auditionee.

A couple of the set pieces stop just short of being truly hilarious, but you're never far away from the next laugh.

What really makes Bowfinger work is the performances of two comedy actors with very different approaches to their craft; Martin's deadpan delivery of lines like "This film is only for Madagascar and Iran, neither of which follow American copyright law" makes Bobby Bowfinger a very watchable

grifter, while Murphy's over-the-top style perfectly suits the neurotic Ramsey. Plus, it wouldn't be an Eddie Murphy film if he only played one character, and he gives an equally energetic performance as Jiff, the dorky Kit Ramsey lookalike drawn in to the movie. Many more laughs come from the film's heightened and satirical side characters, including Heather Graham's naïve young starlet, Christine Baranski's pretentious veteran actress, and Robert Downey Jr.'s studio exec.

It's not the most biting satire out there, nor is it the funniest comedy, but this good-hearted, zany take on the movie industry zips through its 97-minute running time and won't fail to keep a smile on your face throughout.

**Extras:** Featurette / Deleted Scenes / Outtakes / Trailer

KIERON MOORE

★★★★★★★★★★ 8





### DR. STRANGE (1978)

**DVD / CERT: U / DIRECTOR & SCREENPLAY: PHILIP DEGUERE JR. / STARRING: PETER HOOTEN, CLYDE KUSATSU, JESSICA WALTER, JOHN MILLS, ANNE-MARIE MARTIN / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Let's take a step back in time to the late 1970s to the TV film version of *Dr. Strange*. This adaptation of the film is going to appeal to those fans who follow all things *Strange*, but it may also hold considerable appeal to those addicts who want to backtrack and enjoy some of the Universal output that never quite made it to series level. It is a pity, as it is one of the better television pilots from that time, with a reasonable plotline and a good introduction to the

character (for its time), which is clearly going to gain far more exposure and success when the new film version opens.

Jessica Walter goes from the *Misty* of Evelyn Draper, still her best performance in the 1971 Clint Eastwood stalker classic, to the mystical Morgan Le Fay, a 15th century witch who has been sent by the upper levels of evil to destroy Sorcerer Supreme Lindmer (the excellent John Mills, who holds the film together). She almost succeeds

in an early confrontation by using a young lady, Clea Lake (Eddie Benton, who then appeared alongside Jamie Lee Curtis in the original *Prom Night* in 1980), but Lindmer survives. When Le Fay gets inside her head and causes her to run from her apartment, Lake is involved in a near-accident with a taxi driver, who takes her to a hospital where Dr. Stephen Strange (Peter Hooten), who works in the psychiatric ward, helps her, little knowing that she and Strange will soon become the key to a battle for greater supremacy on Earth....

Stan Lee was a consultant on this particular version, and had the show been picked up then it would have provided a really good escape on prime-time TV with fellow Marvel offerings *The Incredible Hulk* and *The Amazing Spider-Man* (which also provided three European theatrical releases in *Spider-Man*, *Spider-Man Strikes Back* and *Spider-Man: The Dragon's Challenge*) also hitting pay-dirt – in fact, Lee has stated that he was also pleased with this version, which we're inclined to agree with.

Peter Hooten gives a good performance as *Strange* – looking like a cross between Jason King and *Magnum PI* – and Benton reminds one of Jennifer O'Neill in *Scanners* – a classic example of a TV beauty from the decade in question. Co-star Clyde Kusatsu plays Wong, Lindmer's sidekick – and is a face some of you may remember from a short-lived adventure series from the early 1980s called *Bring 'em Back Alive*, which starred Bruce Boxleitner and Cindy Morgan from *TRON*.

The new version of *Doctor Strange* purports to be bigger and more spectacular than this adaptation. Cumberbatch certainly has a lot to live up to and there is a hope that some of the charm prevalent in this TV film will be captured amidst the mega-budget pyrotechnics. It may not have the advancement in effects given the time period, but there is much heart within, thanks in part to John Mills, who proved his worth as a true acting legend in work like this.

JOHN HIGGINS



### THE HILLS HAVE EYES (1977)

**DVD + BD / CERT: 18 / DIRECTOR & SCREENPLAY: WES CRAVEN / STARRING: SUSAN LANIER, MICHAEL BERRYMAN, DEE WALLACE, JOHN STEADMAN, ROBERT HOUSTON, MARTIN SPEER / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Sandwiched between *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974) and *Halloween* (1978), Wes Craven's 1977 follow-up to the controversial *The Last House on the Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes* remains one of the key tent-poles of horror history. To the 1980s generation of horror kids, it is part of their initiation into a lifelong love of the genre.

Arrow Video once again strike gold with this 40th Anniversary Blu-ray Special Edition, a magnificent transfer that gives the film a lovingly greater impact than it had back in its original pre-VRA

release through World of Video 2000 (which also distributed the first UK releases of *Nightmares in a Damaged Brain* and *Don't Answer the Phone*. This new updated edition includes not only the original theatrical cut, but also a version with an alternate ending, as well as brand new interviews (with cast member Martin Speer and composer Don Peake), the standard audio commentaries, a reel of outtakes, and the Anchor Bay documentary that looks back at the making of the film, featured on an earlier DVD release.

Made for under \$500,000, *The Hills Have Eyes* is loosely based on a real-life cannibal family legend. It chronicles the trials and tribulations of the Carter family, out on a trip to Los Angeles with their dogs *Beauty* and *Beast*. They are in search of a silver mine, allegedly a present to the parents celebrating their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, but, due to misunderstanding the map in their possession, they take a wrong turn and crash their vehicle. Unbeknownst to them, a whole cannibal family is happily living in the vicinity, and taking not too kindly to this Cleveland-based combo trespassing on their desert patch. With no vehicle and limited supplies, the stage is set for a disturbing and prolonged ordeal...

Horror icon Michael Berryman, whose image adorns early VHS covers (one of which can be glimpsed early on in the cabin in Sam Raimi's original classic *Evil Dead*), confirmed his status as *Pluto*, and Dee Wallace, still ahead of her appearance in Joe Dante's werewolf classic *The Howling* (1981), acquits herself admirably as one of the Carter clan. Indeed, every single member of the cast, much like those on show in Sean Cunningham's

original *Friday the 13th*, heightens the dynamic throughout.

What has elevated *The Hills Have Eyes* above other films is its more extreme guerrilla filmmaking situation. Whilst *Chain Saw* and *Halloween* were both shot in more accessible areas like Texas and suburban California, the desert location here (which according to the documentary interview with the filmmakers was about 114 degrees at times in the day and freezing in the night) makes the overall result all the more incredible to experience to this day.

It is high time for horror fans old and new to experience the late director legend's best work of the 1970s.

**Extras:** Two brand new audio commentaries / Audio commentary with Wes Craven and Peter Locke / *Looking Back on the Hills Have Eyes* documentary / Interviews / Alternate ending / Outtakes / TV spots / Trailers / Image gallery / Original screenplay / 6 postcards / Fold-out poster / Limited edition booklet

JOHN HIGGINS







## DARLING

**DVD / CERT: 18 / DIRECTOR & SCREENPLAY: MICKEY KEATING / STARRING: LAUREN ASHLEY CARTER, SEAN YOUNG, BRIAN MORVANT, LARRY FESSENDEN, JOHN SPEREDAKOS / RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER 24TH**

Big old houses. On the one hand, great - impress your mates with all that space to spread themselves about, have fantastic parties, loads of room for guests at Christmas and whole rooms to dedicate to various aspects of your collections, including luxurious wooden shelf-space to house all of your copies of *STARBURST* magazine dating back to 1977. So yes, very cool indeed. But then there's those nights when you're all on your lonesome with the whole darned place to yourself and there's a howling wind outside and strange creaking noises echoing

down the stairs...

An unnamed young woman, nervous as a dormouse, arrives at a giant New York mansion said to be the oldest in the city. She is applying for a job as a caretaker to the property while the 'Madame' of the house is away. All seems well for the appointment, pending references of course, but there's just that one pesky thing to be imparted: the previous caretaker committed suicide by hurling herself off the balcony. No not a major issue then.

This is a film student's nirvana; director Mickey Keating

(*Carnage Park*) clearly loves his Polanski but there are also pungent aromas of *De Palma* and Kubrick wafting around the piece. The keyword here is madness, which it infests every frame and totally dictates the movie's style; one only has to see *Darling's* googly-eyed interview with the lady of the house (a nice cameo from Sean Young) to clock just how well leading lady Lauren Ashley Carter has nailed the nuttier gene. As well as the obvious parallels with Catherine Deneuve's peerless turn in *Repulsion*, there's a giant kiss to Kubrick's controversial twist on *The Shining*; the *Overlook* is supposed to turn Jack Torrance mad but as soon as we see Jack Nicholson driving up to the hotel we know he's crazed already.

Keating hit gold when he found the old mansion location for this movie. Originally intended for a more modern setting, plans apparently changed when Lauren Ashley Carter (did we say how good she is in this?) told him about the giant gaff owned by a family for whom she walked dogs. Bingo! Just as the famous old Bradbury Building transformed the atmosphere of the classic *Outer Limits* segment *Demon With A Glass Hand* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, so this

piece of NYC real estate proves a formidable character in its own right - the stuff of nightmares, in fact.

*Darling* is a fun ride if you like your psycho-thrillers spiced with classic influences but could have taken a further tip from Polanski and eased back a notch (or three) on the showmanship. Yes, we dig all the references and the black and white photography is starkly beautiful, but the over-use of jarring synaptic flash-shots and garish colour title cards before each portentously-named 'chapter' smack of too much time spent tinkering around in post-production. Similarly overcooked is the scenario; with the main character clearly out of her gourd from the off, the bleakly imposing old house is more than enough to trigger the events that follow; the *Amityville*-style supernatural layer that's added on feels redundant.

So yes, a more stripped-back, less self-consciously referential film exists under all of the pyrotechnic 'technique' on show, but this is still an accomplished work anchored by a mesmeric leading performance.

MICHAEL COLDWELL

★★★★★★★★★★ 7



## LOST SOUL: THE DOOMED JOURNEY OF RICHARD STANLEY'S ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

**DVD + BD / CERT: 15 / DIRECTOR: DAVID GREGORY / STARRING: FAIRUZA BALK, HUGH DICKSON, OLI DICKSON / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

There are those of us - this reviewer included - who believe that Richard Stanley could have become one of the world's truly great filmmakers, if the gods had been on his side. His first film, *Hardware*, is a cult classic. His second film, *Dust Devil*, was even better. But both *Hardware* and *Dust Devil* hit major bumps in the road - *Hardware* was famously

smacked with a lawsuit from 2000 AD, and *Dust Devil* was so badly butchered by Miramax that it was lost in the wilderness for several years. Even though Stanley's *Final Cut* of the movie is now available on DVD, it has never received the acclaim it deserves. And then came the straw that really broke Stanley's back: *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. Creating a definitive cinematic

version of *Dr. Moreau* had always been Stanley's dream, and David Gregory's fascinating documentary elegantly charts how that dream quickly became a nightmare: from an early crisis meeting with the film's star, Marlon Brando, that had Stanley so worried he asked a Warlock friend to supply some magical intervention, to the infantile super-brat tactics of the film's other leading man, Val Kilmer, who was not only locked in psychological warfare with Brando, but was also intent on undermining Stanley at every turn, to an unprecedented tropical storm that destroyed most of the film's sets, to New Line Cinema's decision to replace Stanley with the despotic John Frankenheimer, to the rumour that Stanley - instead of boarding the first flight out of Australia, as New Line demanded - had 'gone troppo' and was living out in the jungle smoking superhuman amounts of pot and laying grandiose plans to sabotage the production... this is, by a very long way, the most astonishing

and engrossing filmmaking documentary we have ever seen. Although it's obvious that Gregory's sympathies lie - quite rightly - with Stanley, it is still a very even-handed piece, loaded with straight-to-camera contributions from Stanley, various members of his cast and crew (but not Kilmer, unsurprisingly), and even one or two of the New Line execs. On top of all that, the film is illustrated with a rich cornucopia of photographs, 'behind the scenes' footage, and some truly astounding storyboard art. The fact that Stanley wasn't allowed to make '*Moreau*' is tragic, but it's even more tragic that the experience burned Stanley so badly he has all but retreated from the world of cinema. Perhaps, one day soon, he will be tempted to return. But until that happens, *Lost Soul* is a teasing 'what if?' and a fine testament to the power of Stanley's original vision.

IAN WHITE

★★★★★★★★★★ 10





### ASH VS. EVIL DEAD: SEASON 1

**DVD / CERT: 18 / DIRECTORS: VARIOUS (INC. SAM RAIMI) / STARRING: BRUCE CAMPBELL, RAY SANTIAGO, DANA DeLORENZO, LUCY LAWLESS, JILL MARIE JONES / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Following 2013's enjoyable but humourless remake/sequel/reboot, Sam Raimi, Bruce Campbell et al return *Evil Dead* to its gore-soaked roots. With (mostly) glorious results.

When we last saw Ash – brief cameo aside – he was either trapped in a post-apocalyptic future, or back working in the S-mart, depending on which version of *Army of Darkness*'s two endings you prefer. After keeping us waiting for over twenty years (has it really been that long?) we now find out that Ash did indeed make it back to his own time, and we pick up

with our reluctant hero: older, definitely no wiser, living in a trailer and still working as a stock boy.

When Ash starts having visions of Deadites at very inopportune moments, he remembers that he might – possibly – have got stoned and read from the *Necronomicon* to try and impress a girl (who hasn't?), Before you can say 'groovy', Ash is reluctantly picking up his chainsaw and boomstick, dismembering elderly neighbours, and setting off on a quest to find out how to undo the damage he's caused.

Joining Ash are two of his co-workers, Pablo and Kelly (Santiago and DeLorenzo, both fantastic), who seem blissfully unaware of what happens to every single person Ash meets. The trail of bodies means they're also pursued by the police, in the shape of detective Amanda Fisher (Jones) and the mysterious Ruby (Lawless), who has sinister motives for wanting to catch up with Ash and the *Necronomicon*. Campbell's been playing Ash for so long now that the character fits him like a second skin. It's good to know though that, despite their obvious affection for him, Campbell and Raimi still resist the temptation to make Ash in any way heroic. He's still a loveable idiot, forced into acts of heroism through his own blundering. And all the more enjoyable for it.

The longer storytelling format afforded by television proves a mixed blessing. Whilst we're treated to a richer story, new demons, and a fleshed-out supporting cast, it lacks the relentless energy of, say, *Evil Dead II*. And after the first few episodes (including the Raimi-directed pilot), things sag slightly mid-season. Fortunately, it recovers, as familiar locations, characters, and appendages make a welcome return; the final few

episodes are up there with the most entertaining stuff *Evil Dead*'s ever done.

You need not worry that the series' traditional gore and humour have been toned down for television. *Evil Dead*'s creators were given complete creative control by the Starz network, with whom they previously collaborated on the distinctly non-family friendly *Spartacus*. Deadites are dispatched in a variety of creative, bloody ways, and the cast are so frequently splattered with gore that, at times it's like watching an 18-rated, blood-soaked Nickelodeon. The humour's a little broader than the first two instalments, skewing closer to the more comedic *Army of Darkness*, and there's the occasional jarring bit of CGI gore thrown in amongst the impressive practical effects, but *Ash vs. Evil Dead* is off to a great start. If the second season keeps up this standard, Ash could be protecting us from Deadites for a long time to come. Hail to the king, baby.

**Extras:** Commentaries on each episode, three featurettes.

IAIN ROBERTSON

★★★★★★★★★ 7



### LURKING FEAR (1994)

**BD / DIRECTOR & SCREENPLAY: C. COURTNEY JOYNER / STARRING: BLAKE ADAMS, ASHLEY LAURENCE, JON FINCH, JEFFREY COMBS, VINCENT SHIAVELLI / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Jeffrey Combs stars in a H.P. Lovecraft adaptation by Full Moon Pictures! Don't get your hopes up though; prolific Lovecraft adaptor Stuart Gordon is nowhere to be seen. The film has very little to do with Mister Lovecraft either, save for the

name, barest bones of an idea and a fear that, indeed, *lurks*.

A cheap cult Gothic, *Lurking Fear* is very much a film of its time, a Full Moon picture from the early nineties. In a great time for lurid Lovecraft adaptations, it rides the rip tide

of such successes as *From Beyond* and *Re-Animator* and its sequel, and coming just before the underrated *Castle Freak*. It may share Combs and producer Charles Band with this g(l)oriously motley lot, but there's no small wonder *Lurking Fear* is (much) less well remembered.

Not Dunwich, the small town of Leffert's Corners is beset by a history of supernatural terrors, leaving it as something of a Ghost Town. Enter brooding ex-con John Martense (Blake Adams, looking then like Scott Eastwood and sounding like Daryl Dixon do now), a man returning to the town to reclaim his heritage. What he finds instead is a town full of ghouls, a priest, Doctor (Combs!) and understandably traumatised woman. Holed up together, the group must attempt to survive bombardment from all quarters, both human and not.

Grizzled criminals and grisly monsters battle for attention in a film with plenty

of style but little substance. It ably apes the visuals of Stuart Gordon and Brian Yuzna, but struggles to hold their audience. Even the magnificent Combs is given relatively little to do, save for smoke and be sarcastic, sidelined in favour of a bland Clint Eastwood lookalike. Thankfully, once the lurking stops and the action starts, it livens up nicely; a cheap, less cool precursor to *From Dusk till Dawn*. Director C. Courtney Joyner handles this and the atmospherics well, but there's no denying the fact that his story isn't very good – Jeffrey Combs or no, there's nothing Lovecraftian about gangsters and hot dames with guns.

*Lurking* is all very fine and well, but, like its unfortunate choice in leading man, this is a film very much lacking in presence.

JOEL HARLEY

★★★★★★★★★ 6





Following on from memorable genre roles in *THE WOMAN* (2011), *JUG FACE* (aka *THE PIT*, 2013) and *POD* (2015), **LAUREN ASHLEY CARTER** now stars as the title character in *DARLING*, a darkly stylish chamber horror from director Mickey Keating. We caught up with her to find about the role that's cemented her status as one of horror cinema's rising stars...

**STARBURST:** With movies like *The Woman*, *Jug Face* and now *Darling*, you've chosen some decidedly dark material.

Lauren Ashley Carter: They are the kind of movies I like to watch. I also get a lot of comedy scripts and I wish that I could do more of that too. But I would like to be able to feel confident to pick things I would want to see, so if I read something that's just OK, I'm not going to pick it even though I desperately need to pay my rent and everything else. If I can't feel good about it, I wouldn't be able to do these interviews and say confidently that I picked a project I was really into from the moment I started to read it.

**Mickey Keating, the director of *Darling*, has spoken about how influential Roman Polanski's '60s output like *Repulsion* and *The Tenant* were on the movie. Did you check out any of Polanski's work beforehand?**

Oh yes, I saw all of them. Mickey is like an encyclopaedia; any time you do a movie with him, he will give you a list of things that he wants you to watch either to take a particular feeling or attitude or the music or whatever. Some of [Polanski's films] I had already seen but I definitely don't have the catalogue that Mickey has in my mind's eye. So it was really fun working with him because you are forced to expand your horror collection!

**You give a mesmerising performance in *Darling*; there's very little dialogue and the camera is on you most of the time.**

I think that it's almost a relief that the camera is always there and just becomes like another crew member. You're surrounded by people the entire time, which is no less like having a camera on you. Then there are technicians on set that have to do ridiculous things and try and not get hit by the camera and a lot of other nonsense that's going on while I'm still being 'in the moment'. So it's kind of nice that from the time we started to the time we ended on *Darling*, the camera was on me and you just forget it.

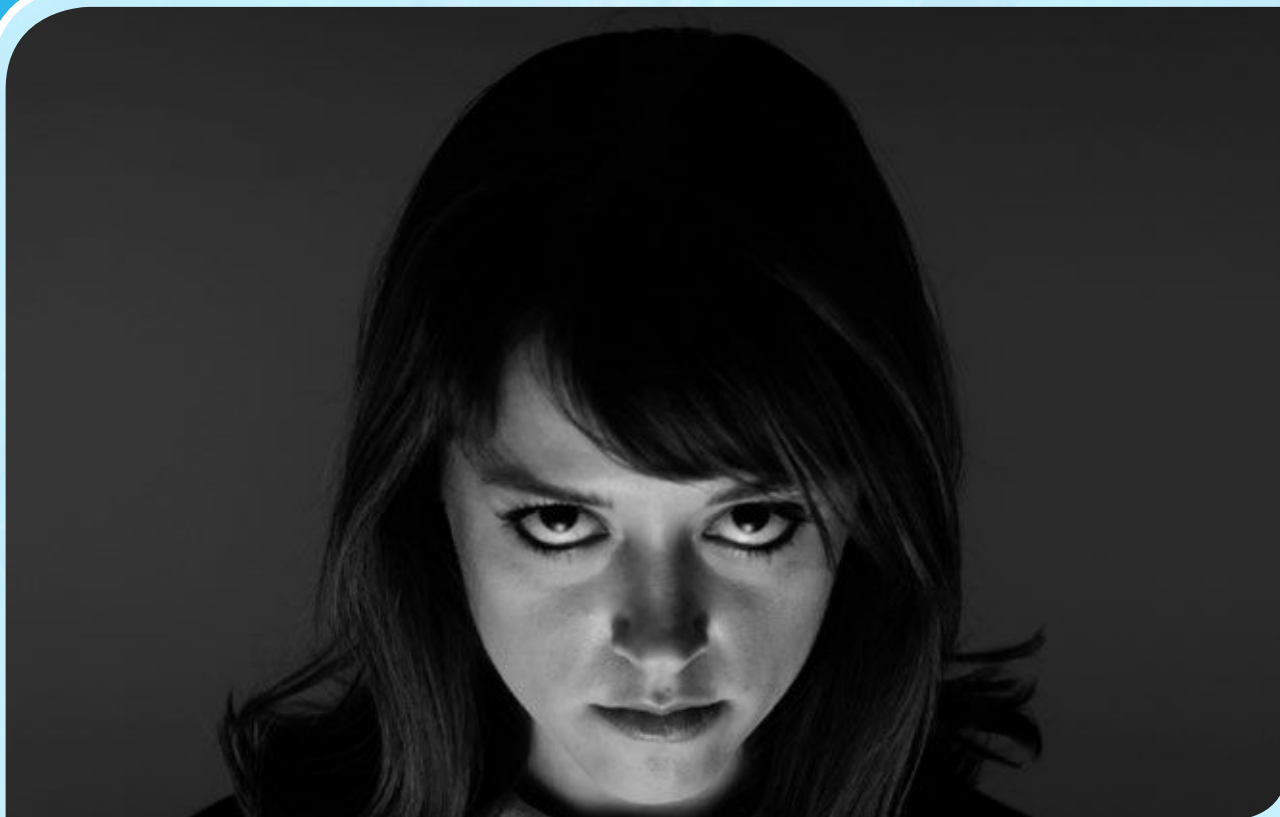
**The house is really your co-star in the film...**

Yes, it is a major character, spot-on. I was actually living there during filming.

**All on your own?**

Yeah, I was on my own just like in the movie. We were there shooting twelve-hour days and I would stay there for the remainder. The house belongs to a friend of mine, she just recently sold it, actually. She was doing renovations and that's when I came over to visit with her and told her we were looking for a location. It was originally going to be set in just a one or two bedroom apartment but then she offered to give us her home for shooting so I called Mickey Keating and said 'hey would you mind doing





a major rewrite so we can do it in this house?!' He didn't see the house until we started because we shot it so quickly. I worried the audience would be quite bored watching me walk all through it, but when you watch the movie you realise how beautiful and magnificent it is.

**Without giving away any spoilers, there is a really spectacular gore sequence in the movie that you are heavily involved in. Did you enjoy all that dismemberment?** Yes, of course! I just really appreciate the work that goes into it. Those guys spend

hours and hours making sure the limbs are true to life and the veins and arteries are filling up with the blood. It's just fascinating, especially the times when you know they can only do things once. I mean, if blood doesn't come out then you can stop and reset a scene, but if you are going to saw something up, that needs to be right first time. I've always said if you're comparing movies to music, then horror would be the black metal of the categories. So in that moment, doing something like that, I feel about as close to being a rock star as I'm ever going to get. It makes me happy just

being covered in blood with a half-naked dead person in the bath there with me!

**This is your second film with actress Sean Young, who plays the role of 'Madame' and who previously played your Mother in *Jug Face*. She's a real cult figure who always attracts a lot of attention. What was it like working with her?**

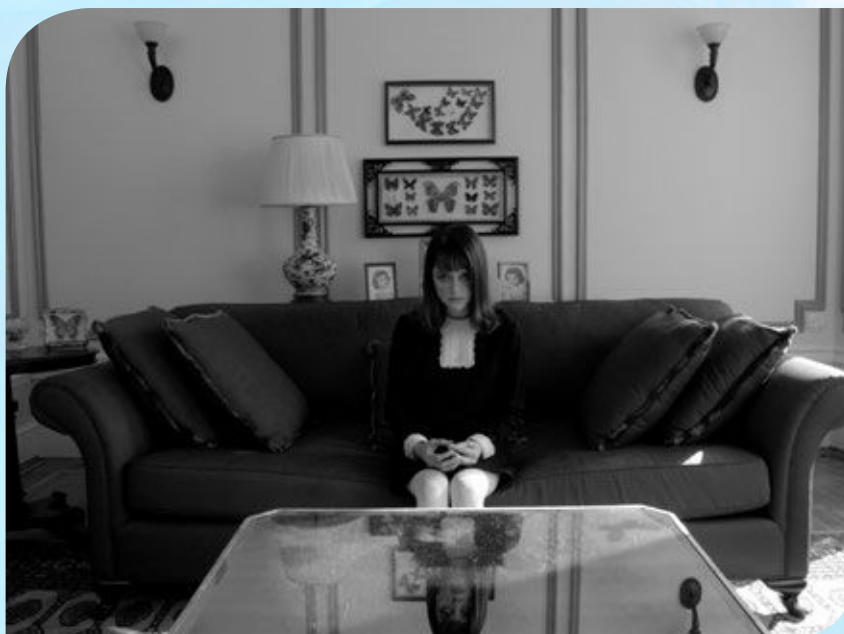
She's great, she knows her shit. She's been in so many films and is very conscious of all of the variables. She comes in and she knows where to stand, she knows how to look and she does not waste any time. She's also a mother of two boys; she was always taking care of me but was never condescending or anything like that. I think that perhaps back when she first started out she was a young girl and she was very much on her own without many women around to protect her, so there was definitely a maternal bond between us, even when she was playing such a wretched mother to me in *Jug Face*!

**Your character in *Darling* is an enigma, we get very little sense of who she really is or where she comes from. Did you give her a backstory of your own to help you play her?**

Oh absolutely, I think if I didn't do that I'd feel very lost and trapped in a role like this. With any job it's about doing your research, doing your homework, however that pertains to you. Unless you happen to be a certain Presidential nominee, you should do your homework!

MICHAEL COLDWELL

*DARLING* is released on DVD on October 24th.





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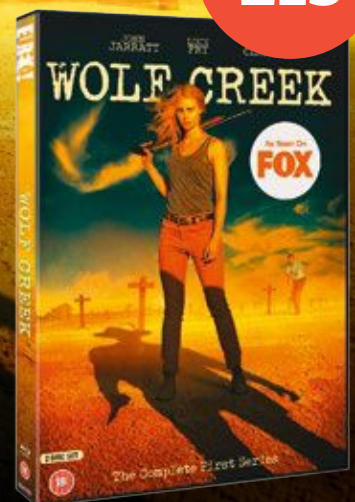
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# AUDIOSTATIC

THE LATEST NEWS  
FROM THE WORLD OF  
AUDIO ADVENTURES  
BY TONY JONES



## Big Finish

Big Finish has announced they will be selling the B7 Media series of **Dan Dare** stories from December. Classic radio sci-fi at its best. There's also been a lot of news on the various **Short Trips** series including details of releases in 2017 and a new set of **Rarities** giving new listeners a chance to buy stories previously only available as subscriber bonuses. There's even been a reissue of the eleven-part **Destiny of the Doctor** series complete with bonus documentary.

## R4/4 Extra

As ever, the BBC has given us plenty to enjoy this month, and even managed a programme to mark the fiftieth anniversary of **Star Trek** called **Star Trek – The Undiscovered Future** ([bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07rh18q](http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07rh18q)). In this documentary, Kevin Fong asks what happened to the vision of the future Gene Roddenberry first gave us in the 1960s.

There's plenty of excitement about the Dirk Maggs adaptation of Neil Gaiman's **Stardust** and even a competition to draw a picture inspired by the story, which closes on October 26th ([bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/r4-illustrate-gaimans-stardust](http://bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2016/r4-illustrate-gaimans-stardust)). Don't forget, there's also a new **Neverwhere** story coming as well, the short story *How the Marquis Got His Coat Back*.

There's plenty more on at the moment, including **The Wonder**, a ten-part Radio 4 **Book at Bedtime** written by Emma Donoghue and read by Carey Mulligan. It's a compelling story about a nurse named Anna O'Donnell arriving in Athlone, Ireland to witness a 'miracle'. There's a welcome return for Wally K. Daly on Radio 4 Extra with the sci-fi trilogy **The Silent Scream** with Hannah Gordon and Donald Hewlett and also a repeat of the John Dryden three-part story **Pandemic**, first broadcast on Radio 4 in 2012. In this story, the world is destroyed by a violent bird-flu like pandemic.

There's also a chance to hear a Big Finish story on Radio 4 Extra in the form of Jonny Morris's **Protect and Survive**. This is a Seventh Doctor story with Ace and Hex as companions. It's powerfully produced and is one of the few stories we've listened to then immediately listened to again.

## Podcasts Spotlight

This month, we take a look at a few podcast audio dramas you might not have heard of and are worthy of your attention. First is **ars PARADOXICA** ([arsparadoxica.com](http://arsparadoxica.com)), which sets itself out as a story about people searching for meaning in a universe that aggressively lacks one. If that wasn't enough, there's time travel and a touch of World War II and Nazis. There have been seventeen episodes so far and the next is due in November. Plenty to keep you entertained.

## Word of Mouth

You might want to take a look at London-based *Word of Mouth Productions* ([wordofmouthproductions.co.uk](http://wordofmouthproductions.co.uk)) who have several series and books available, and are even looking for writers. One thing on their website that takes our fancy is the series **Endurance** with Julian Glover and Isla Blair.

## BIG FINISH WE LOVE STORIES

### Key titles to watch out for this month from Big Finish...

#### JAGO & LITEFOOT: SERIES 12

Four more adventures for the Infernal Investigators see them looking into a series of vampire attacks, including a robbery and murder at an art gallery, where the curator has been found completely drained of blood and get involved with a sideshow film exhibit that features some very real terrifying creatures living inside the celluloid.

AVAILABLE OCTOBER 31st

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#### THE CONFESSIONS OF DORIAN GRAY: SERIES 5

More tales of hedonism and corruption inspired by Oscar Wilde's legendary character. Alexander Vlahos returns as Gray in his final five hour-long episodes, bringing the decadent ageless Gray bang up-to-date in 2016 London. There's also a bonus disc of interviews with the cast and crew.

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#### DOCTOR WHO SHORT TRIPS: 6.10 RULEBOOK

The Fifth Doctor undertakes another adventure narrated by Nicola Bryant (Peri), this tale sees the pair attempting to help the Ellani of Beadledom 3, who have been invaded by the Valtor. As usual, there are bigger threats on the way... Written by STARBURST's own Tony Jones (a recommendation if ever there was!).

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#### DOCTOR WHO THE EARLY ADVENTURES 3.2 THE FIFTH TRAVELLER

Another adventure for the First Doctor, which sees the TARDIS visit the land of the Arunde. The jungle planet is split between the wildlife living within the trees and the rulers high above the foliage. The Doctor and his companions are thrown in the middle of a situation that half of the population blame them for, the others think they are the salvation. Just another day at the office, then?

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#### DOCTOR WHO 2.17 THE MEMORY BANK AND OTHER STORIES

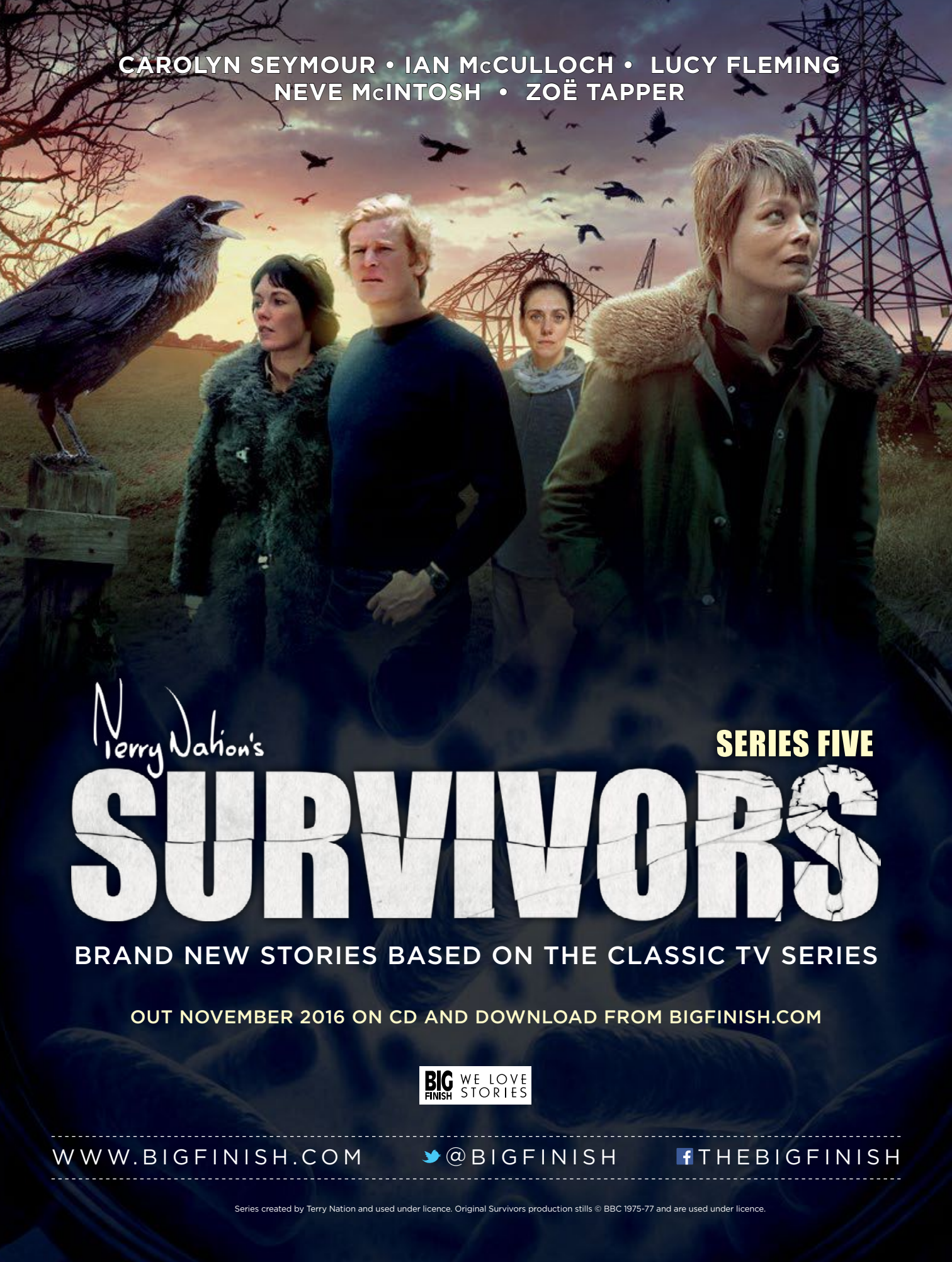
The Fifth Doctor once again - voiced by Peter Davison himself - undertakes four more adventures with companion Turlough (Mark Strickson). The stories are written by Paul Magrs, Chris Chapman, Eddie Robson, and Ian Potter and promise to be riveting listening.

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# REVIEWS

THE LATEST AUDIO  
RELEASES REVIEWED  
AND RATED



## **SATAN'S SLAVE (1976)**

COMPOSER: JOHN SCOTT / LABEL: MOSCOVITCH  
MUSIC / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Satan's Slave is one of the big underrated movies of the '70s, directed by the legendary Norman J. Warren and written by the equally fabulous David McGilivray. The film's score, by the prolific and often overlooked John

Scott, is finally set for a glorious release on a CD and a beautifully presented vinyl set.

If one hasn't seen the movie, there'll be no issue as the music and series of cues presented here are an interesting listen. The opening track, Main Titles, sets the mood perfectly, with brooding notes leading to a mournful refrain. It's reminiscent of the opening of A Clockwork Orange, mixed with The Blood on Satan's Claw. Perfect. Track two, Sacrifice, brings in a tribal feel, and certainly sends shivers down the spine of the listener; a very tangible threat is felt - something Scott manages to maintain throughout the following tracks and cues.

Even the more 'hip' sounding Drive to Alexander's and Crash - which would have worked wonderfully as a theme tune to a documentary show on TV in the '70s, which should come as no surprise really as Scott has a long history on the small screen, having composed the theme music for BBC's Nationwide - manages to meld whimsy with a terrifying threat of what is to come.

Several regular themes are repeated throughout the record, almost always

coming alongside something completely unexpected, creating an equally unnerving and exciting listen. By the time we get to Stephen Kills Frances and Kitchen Rendezvous (track 19), the horns are screaming and there is a definite air of Psycho as the pace slows before a powerful, tense conclusion.

Satan's Slave is a stunning piece of work, melding some erratic styles perfectly and creating a genuine atmosphere of dread with each listen. The vinyl edition has liner notes by director Warren and Moscovitch Music head Joel Martin, while the CD version's booklet features more images from the film and extra notes from composer Scott. Either (or both!) releases are essential purchases for fans of horror soundtracks. The film may not be as high profile as some, but it is certainly having some resurgence with fans and will be recognised as a vital entry to the British horror pantheon one day.

MARTIN UNSWORTH

★★★★★★★★★ 9



## **THE SECRET OF SPRINGHEEL'D JACK SERIES 3 EPISODE THREE: THE LORDS OF THE WORLD**

DIRECTOR: ROBERT VALENTINE / WRITER: GARETH PARKER, ROBERT VALENTINE / STARRING: CHRISTOPHER FINNEY, ANDREW SHEPHERD, JONATHAN HANSLER, JENNY RUNACRE, DAVID BENSON, MATTHEW KELLY, SHANE RIMMER, KATY MANNING / PUBLISHER: WIRELESS THEATRE COMPANY / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

It was six Christmas Eves ago when the first instalment of the Wireless Theatre Company's saga about the Victorian myth Springheel'd Jack first appeared. Beginning with a prologue about a fire on

Scratch Row, we have followed Detective Jonah Smith from boy to man and now potentially to the grave, and this ninth and concluding episode at last promises a resolution to the mystery of Smith's unidentified adversary.

We join Smith in the company of one-time rival and reluctant companion Hopcraft, deep beneath the scene of their introduction into this narrative, and on the precipice of their quarry's underground lair. But before they can finally settle on an identity for the damaged Jack, there's the matter of the German bounty hunters who have been dogging Smith's progress throughout this third series. This Springheel story has long combined a foreshadowing political backbone to its supernatural main text, and the interplay between the various parties - both historical and fictional, of course - always feels a natural accompaniment, rather than a distraction. There is even a small cameo for Queen Victoria, by an almost unrecognisably restrained former companion of Doctor Who; the second time this year this has happened.

There are few shocks or surprises in Parker and Valentine's story. Events unfold pretty much as you hope they might, albeit with a sudden dovetailing towards Spielberg in the final act, after eight half-hours of Conan Doyle meets Bram Stoker. As much as it has been an intrigue and a thriller, the Springheel saga has also

been an adventure and a rollick. What was entirely unexpected was the emotional impact of this final episode; rather than fireworks, The Lords of the World - a title whose dual meaning only really sinks in once the play has long finished - opts for a languid, gradual unravelling of narrative and character, wrapping up the plot around two-thirds of the way through so that it can focus on its significance thereafter. Without resorting to sentiment, the drama nevertheless provokes a genuinely affecting response.

One of the joys of this story has been how, despite a wry sense of humour, the script and cast have always played things straight. And the cast - including Julian Glover and Nicholas Parsons in previous instalments, and the likes of David Benson, giving a glorious Disraeli, Matthew Kelly and Shane Rimmer here - have been fantastic, the odd cod-German accent aside. But really the plaudits belong to Christopher Finney, often underplaying as Jonah Smith and yet creating a charismatic backbone to the saga out of a terse, troubled and occasionally ill-tempered individual. It's been a pleasure to spend time in his company, and he - along with the rest of the Springheel saga - will be sorely missed.

JR SOUTHALL

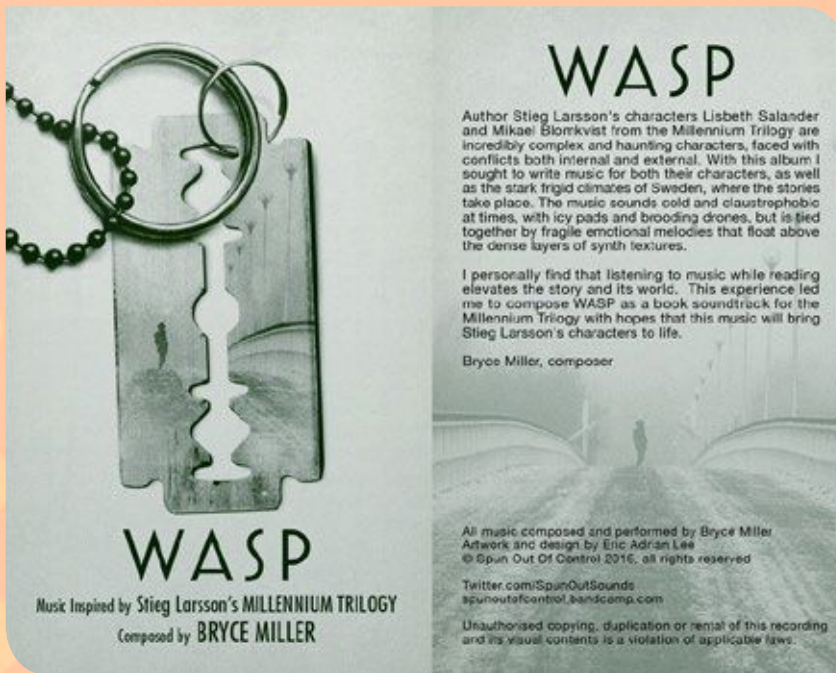
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## WASP (2016)

COMPOSER: BRYCE MILLER / LABEL: SPUN OUT OF CONTROL / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Bryce Miller's put together an interesting musical experiment with his release of WASP. He composed all of the music while reading his way through Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy (also known as "The Girl Who ..." books). It's pretty basic ambient music, for the most part, and while it really creates an atmosphere, which accurately reflects the cold world in which the Millennium Trilogy takes place, it's not

anything that really stands out, as one begins listening.

We suppose that's the point: obviously, Williams' score is meant to be played as you're reading, and we certainly understand that anything too terribly distracting will take away from the experience of the books. However, one does want to be able to put this tape in the cassette deck for reasons other than

reading Stieg Larsson's books. They're enjoyable, but much as we don't play Star Wars scores only as background for Star Wars films, there needs to be something more to WASP than just background noise.

Happily, "74774 [Idiotic\_Table]" appears at just such a point in one's listening experience that its robust thump is a welcome surprise. While not a rocker by any standard, it's positively a banger in comparison to the tracks that proceed it. The build from quiet melancholy into thudding beats is gradual, and just as it turns into a speeding rush, it returns to that melancholy again. It's not until the beginning of the second side of the cassette, with "Blomkvist", that things really take off into more emphatic territory.

The entirety of Side B is a force with which to be reckoned. It's far more intensive a musical workout than Side A, and making it all the way through "No Compromises" - especially as it doesn't relent at any point, much as the title implies - leaves you feeling like you've just ran a race. The relaxation one gets with "Just Company" is fairly much undone by the panic-inducing thrall of bonus track "Exposed Secrets".

Composer Bryce Miller has a short essay in the WASP cassette's J-card that explains his rationale behind the project, and one's impressed by how fully a cassette can realise the vision of three full novels. It's definitely suited for a reading experience, and thanks to a second side that can grab your attention, works well for casual listening, as well.

NICK SPACEK

★★★★★ 6



## FROZEN EXISTENCE (2016)

COMPOSER: REPEATED VIEWING / LABEL: LUNARIS RECORDS / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

After several years of being a Bandcamp-only release, Repeated Viewing's Frozen Existence finds its way to physical media via Lunaris Records. Given that this was one of Alan Sinclair's first releases as

Repeated Viewing, it's a lot more derivative than his more recent work, but as the score for a Lucio Fulci-esque supernatural gorefest, it certainly works well. Most of Frozen Existence is pretty much atmospherics that really didn't grab this reviewer too much, but the opening and closing cuts are full on - Fabio Frizzi Italia bangers.

It's spooky and laden with foreboding, and the way the cuts all blend together with whispering winds, crowing birds, and strange otherworldly sounds, it takes over your very ability to function as each side plays. Frozen Existence is utterly sinister, and while Sinclair only occasionally rips into the guitars which dominate the opening and closing themes, as on "Investigation Part 1", he more than ably counterbalances that with the eerie synth work for which he's become so well known, as on "Investigation Part 2".

That latter track, which closes Frozen Existence's first side, makes use of those bent and pitch-shifted tones with

which Frizzi made so many disturbing scores. They drone on insistently behind a keyboard part which is almost spritely, but shot through with demonic intent due to that inescapable drone.

That drone is taken to its logical conclusion as the second side begins, and "Hope Unknown" swirls around a windswept tone, punctuated only by a repeated baseline. It goes on so long that "Love After Midnight", which follows, despite being rather dark, feels positively uplifting in its wake. It might be the only track on Frozen Existence - or in Repeated Viewing's entire catalog - which feels upbeat at all actually, which is a rather startling conclusion to reach.

The latter half of the second side isn't quite as dynamic as the rest of the album, and it gets a little dull until the final cut, but it's still fairly solid music. At the end of it all, you can hear the underpinnings of what would later become much more thoroughly realised and unique takes on film scores by Sinclair, but even rough and derivative Repeated Viewing is still worth listening to.

NICK SPACEK

★★★★★ 6





# PAUL DARRROW

YOU'RE HIM, AREN'T YOU?

## **YOU'RE HIM, AREN'T YOU?**

WRITTEN AND READ BY PAUL DARRROW / DIRECTOR: LISA BOWERMAN /  
PUBLISHER: BIG FINISH / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Paul Darrow is an accomplished actor on stage and the small screen, a prolific and respected voice artist and an occasional singer. Throughout a long and varied career, in which he has ensured that he always remained a "competitively priced" performer (his words), he has toured in numerous theatrical productions, tackled a wide variety of Shakespearean roles, entertained audiences in thrillers and whodunits, won critical plaudits for his portrayal of Elvis, featured in numerous television shows, and paid his dues in the realm of corporate training videos and after-dinner reviews.

Yet Darrow has long since come to terms with the fact that, regardless of the breadth and diversity of his thespian credentials, he will always be most readily associated with the TV role he played for just four years of a career that has already spanned more than five decades: that of Kerr Avon in the BBC's space opera *Blake's 7*.

While other actors in a similar position have railed against the consequences of so strong a popular connection between themselves and a single, defining TV role, Darrow is far more sanguine. He had already established himself as a successful actor before *Blake's 7*, and went on to build the kind of impressive and broadly grounded career that would be the envy of most jobbing TV actors working today. At the same time he has not, like several of his *Blake's 7* colleagues, sought to distance himself from his portrayal of Avon, or to denigrate in any way the affection and esteem in which the series is held by its many adherents. Indeed, he has been closely involved in several attempts to revive and regenerate the series over the years, and, in addition to writing *B7* novels, has become an enthusiastic participant in Big Finish's range of audio adventures set within the timeframe of the original TV series.

Darrow's 2006 autobiography *You're Him, Aren't You?* was a well received (and well written) account of the actor's lengthy and rather distinguished career, which gave a satisfying amount of space over to his work as a young, breakthrough actor, before turning attention to *Blake's 7*, fandom, and reflections on the pleasures and pitfalls of the actor's life. This audio reading of the book is comprehensive and complete, taking up seven discs in total, and is unquestionably a substantial body of work for any listener to commit to. The good news is that this hugely entertaining, witty and insightful work is more than worth the investment in time and money.

Starting with a warm, but unsentimental, account of his early family life and his time at different schools (leading to

some impressive anecdotes about his time as a wily young cadet), Darrow then sets out, in an equally unaffected way, the challenges of launching himself as an actor. As his career begins to take off, Darrow offers real insights into life as a member of a touring repertory company, and the realities of life on the road. It is territory that many actors have explored in their memoirs, but Darrow avoids the usual clichés (of tyrannical landlords and empty matinees) and offers instead some original and revealing perspectives on the world of the roving performer. His descriptions of overseas tours are especially evocative, and full of encouraging recommendations about places the listener should visit.

An experienced vocal performer, Darrow gives life to his own words with a command and confidence that appears effortless. Not only is he a first-rate raconteur, Darrow also has the ability to make the telling of his tale feel up close and personal. This is not someone broadcasting their life history; instead, it feels like someone attentively recounting the story of their career to a single listener. Throughout the work, Darrow addresses his audience directly, anticipating their reaction to events, answering their questions, and acknowledging their likely areas of interest.

Darrow's description of the time, in the 1980s, that he took the lead role in *Are You Lonesome Tonight?*, a stage play based on the life of Elvis Presley, is particularly striking and conjures up some memorable images (leaving every listener on tenterhooks in case Darrow takes advantage of the audio format to burst into song, which, sadly, he does not). A self-confessed Shakespeare buff, Darrow's love of the Bard's plays also shines through in each description of the many leading and supporting roles he has played.

Darrow is well aware that that most of those following his life story are eager to hear tales of Avon and *Blake's 7*. He takes the opportunity to revisit his work on the series in two different ways; firstly, by providing his own brief (and very perceptive) assessment of each episode in the entire run; and then, secondly, by recalling a whole number of intriguing behind-the-scenes stories about the making of the show. He provides much thoughtful consideration of the nature of Avon, a character he perceives as a mixture of "Steve McQueen and Elvis Presley with a little touch of Richard Nixon". Throughout the discussion, he remains generous when giving credit, and highlights fellow actors, writers and directors for praise, reserving his most fulsome appreciation for the show's creator, Terry Nation. He is equally positive in his assessment of the role of fandom, and the experience of amateur and intimate (and professional and large scale) conventions. Candid about his own relationship with loyal fans of the show, his is both an affectionate and a non-saccharine view.

Exhibiting good humour throughout, this is no salacious tale of gossip and intrigue and contains no hint of score-settling. Rather, this is a generous and inclusive tale that focuses on the risks and rewards of the actor's craft. "I never promised you sex, drugs and rock'n'roll, did I?" he asserts at one point. While this doesn't offer the raw and uncensored personal exposure of Jacqueline Pearce's recent *Call Me Jacks*, Darrow is clearly comfortable with the answer to the question "You're Him, Aren't You?". When he describes Avon as forever "hovering at my shoulder", a character that "refuses to be abandoned", there is little sense of resentment in the observation. Rather, it's a reality that Darrow has long since reconciled himself to.

Honest enough to acknowledge his disappointment at not securing significant film roles, Darrow accepts that he has attained "a kind of celebrity" and wonders what future possibilities might still come his way. Though clearly committed to many more years of stage work, voicing documentaries, dramas and trailers, putting in TV appearances (and doing other less expected things), his anticipation of the obituaries that will appear in the popular press on his passing are as hilarious as they are self-effacing. Delivered with the kind of captivating vocal qualities that give drama directors goosebumps, and imbued with a sense of wry self-deprecation and professional modesty that come across as entirely genuine, this is consistently absorbing storytelling. When Avon calls, you want to listen.

RICH CROSS

★★★★★★★★★ 9



# STARBURST

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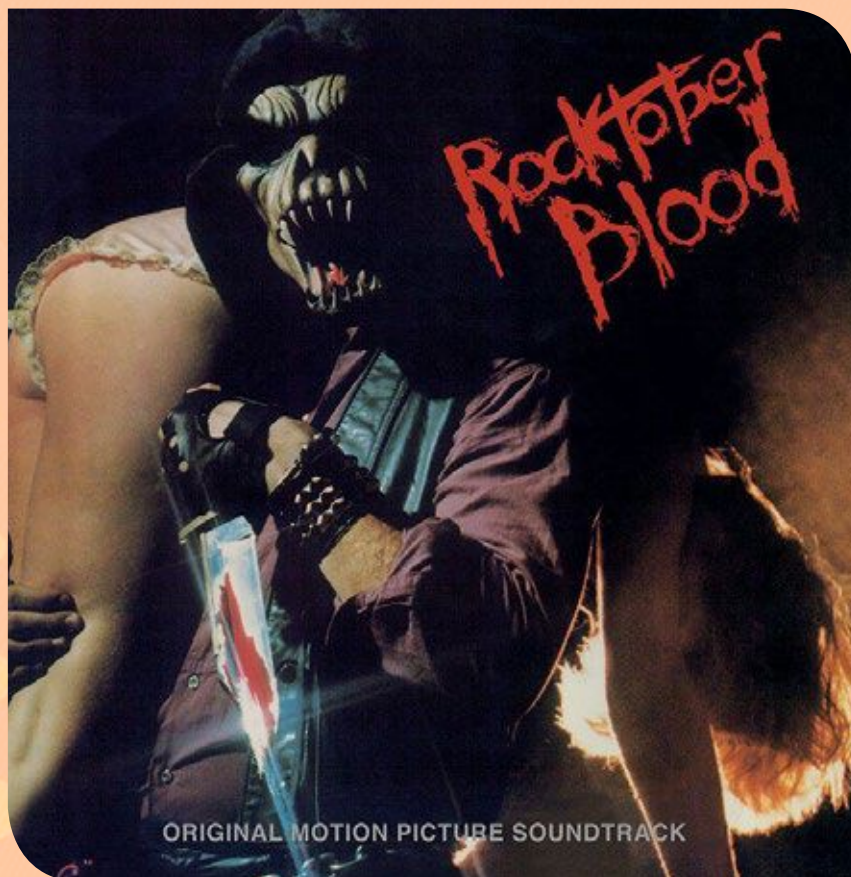


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# OST

THE STARBURST  
GUIDE TO THE LATEST  
SOUNDTRACKS  
BY NICK SPACEK



the first time ever. While the movie is pretty much a low-budget nightmare, the songs - including the standout track, *I'm Back* - really deserve to be heard by a wider audience. Thankfully, now they can.

Private Records imprint Stella Edizione Musicali return with their first release in a while, and it's a doozy - the complete Detto Mariano score for the 1986 giallo slasher, *L'assassino è ancora tra noi*, also known as *The Killer is Still Among Us*. This score is darker than the two previous releases from the composer that Private put out, but still recognisable as the work of the synth-happy musician. The double LP should be available as you read this, on either blue or black vinyl.

Terror Vision finally has a new release officially announced, and we're thrilled to see that it's Gus Russo's score for the original *Basket Case*. Given the love that the Joe Renzetti score for the sequel recently received from Ship to Shore, this is a grand time to be a fan of Frank Henenlotter films. No details on a release date or specifics, but we do know that the score to the 1982 film - which has never before been released - will be available digitally, as well as on compact disc, cassette, and vinyl. It's also the first of three releases coming from the label this autumn.

Swiss label We Release Whatever the Fuck We Want continues to put out - well, the obvious, but also a pair of amazing releases that we never would've thought of seeing come down the pike. A few recently announced as being on the way this autumn are Stefano Mainetti's *Zombi 3* - on green inferno vinyl - which will also be available digitally. A vinyl-only release starts shipping at the end of this month for *Amer*, the nuevo giallo from 2009, which features music from the likes of Stelvio Cipriani, Bruno Nicolai, and Ennio Morricone. Both releases are available



**W**e were all excited to hear what Academy Award-winning composer Alexandre Desplat would do for the upcoming *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, but it appears that's not to be. Supposedly due to the fact that the film's had to schedule some reshoots, the *Rogue One* score will now be done by long-time J. J. Abrams collaborator Michael Giacchino. We're still excited for the film, but a bit more ambivalent now. Desplat's ability to be vibrant and creative would've suited the first *Star Wars* anthology film really well, and helped set it apart as something new and exciting, rather than just a continuation of what's come before.

We've come to hope that *Rogue One*'s going to be something akin to a war film meets heist movie, and while Giacchino's a solid composer, his best work - while emotionally evocative - always seems to be designed to mirror that which has come before. He's good, but *Star Trek*, *Jurassic World*, and *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* are all franchise pictures that have scores that don't really jump out and

do something new, whereas Desplat's *Godzilla* score managed to homage the original and still sound modern. While we're sure it'll be good, it's just not likely to be the tonal shift it could've been.

Holy smokes! Literally: Intrada is releasing a sixtieth anniversary collection for Cecil B. DeMille's 1957 film that defined the word epic, *The Ten Commandments*. This box set of Elmer Bernstein's music spans six compact discs, three of which are devoted just to the two-and-half-hour complete score - 'everything right down to the tiniest tiple', as the press release puts it. There are also unused alternate cues, the original mono release, a 1966 stereo recording, and enough other extras to make you lose your mind. It's an obsessively complete release, and the highlight of the year.

Just in time for Halloween, Lunaris Records presents the reissue of the soundtrack to the heavy metal horror classic, *Rocktober Blood*. In addition to grey marble and transparent red with black splatter vinyl, the blasts of rock 'n' roll come to compact disc and cassette for

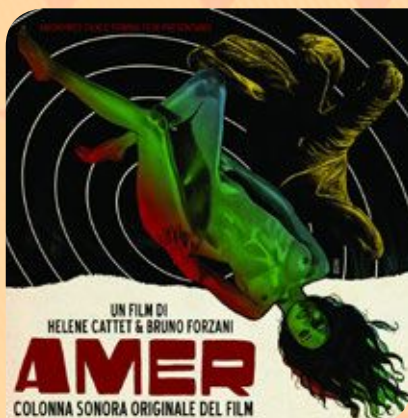




on vinyl for the first time, with **Zombi 3** remastered from the original tapes, as well.

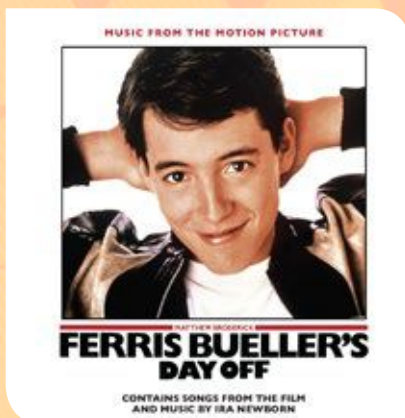
Enjoy the Ride imprint Enjoy the Toons has its first non-television related release now out. While the label's been largely devoted to Nickelodeon cartoons, they've branched out recently. In addition to the recent **Fraggle Rock** compilation LP, they now have **The Best of Batman: Arkham Knight**. The single LP was curated by composer Nick Arundel, and comes in two varieties. Both vinyl LPs come in heavy-duty sleeves, and are available in Batman and Joker variants, with the former being a black in silver, and the latter being a red in black. They're limited to 250 copies each, with a further 500 Batman pressed with red and blue splatter as a Zavvi exclusive.

Silva Screen's BBC Radiophonic re-releases have been regular highlights in our mailbox as of late. With each successive LP, our record shelves become filled with amazing electronic music from the vaults. 1984's **The Living Planet**, composed by Elizabeth Parker, came out last month, and it's gorgeously evocative of the David Attenborough documentary series. This came hot on the trails of **21**, a collection of important and influential cuts from the history of the Radiophonic Workshop. Now we have 1983's **The Soundhouse**, which features material entirely new since **21**, and mostly composed on the then-revolutionary Fairlight CMI. Most notably, we've got two Paddy Kingsland cuts from **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** television series. It's out on compact disc now, and is due out on vinyl LP next month.



The hot thing in recent years has been to re-score classic films with music by modern musicians. We've seen everything from the Laze's version of **The Phantom of the Opera** to Antoni Maiorvi and Umberto doing **The Texas Chain Saw Massacre**, as well as LARVA's take on the classic psychedelic film **The Mask**. We've even seen the likes of Canadian hardcore band Fucked Up taking on Tod Browning's silent film, **West of Zanzibar**. However, nothing seems to be as appropriate in terms of pairing as the new version of Kung Fu flick **The 36th Chamber of the Shaolin** with the music of RZA. The Wu-Tang Clan member and producer has live-scored the Lau Kar-leung film - which inspired the hip-hop group's founding - with music from throughout the Wu-Tang's 20-year history. It's currently playing select dates in the United States.

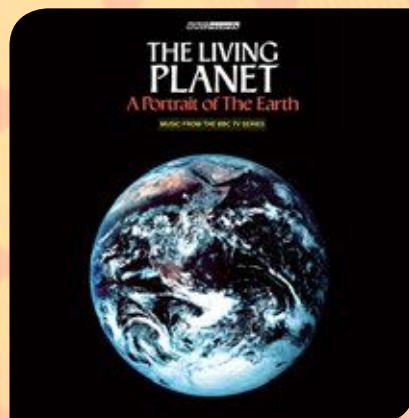
We were super-excited to find out La-La Land was finally releasing the official soundtrack to **Ferris Bueller's Day Off** for the movie's 30th anniversary. Somehow, it's never been released, due to the fact that the songs were just too diverse and weird to really appeal to everyone. This official version is a limited-edition of 5000 on compact disc, so folks should be really happy that this is finally a thing. It's great and all, but given that some of the film's most iconic songs couldn't be included due to licensing issues, it's a bit of a mixed bag. There's no **Twist & Shout** by the Beatles, nor is there **The Beat's March of the Swivelheads**. Thankfully, there's Wayne Newton's **Danke Schoen**, as well as a plentiful amount of Ira Newborn's score to balance it all out.



If you missed out on snagging the long-since-sold-out Mondo vinyl version of Clint Mansell's **Black Swan**, you're in luck. This month, Music on Vinyl is putting out a single disc version of the score. Mondo's version was a double LP on multi-coloured vinyl, while Music on Vinyl's will be one white vinyl LP. Given the amazingness of this score, that interpolates pieces of the Tchaikovsky ballet, this is easily something which should be in everyone's collection. Well, now here's a readily available, relatively affordable version for all of you.

Right, before we finished up the column, everyone was teasing their upcoming releases via social media, so here's a quick roundup of what you can expect. There aren't any release dates or specifics, but based on what we've seen, Waxwork Records will not only have their version of the **Mad Monster Party** soundtrack out soon, but a double vinyl LP of Harry Sukman's **Salem's Lot** score, as well. This marks the score's vinyl debut after a 2013 Intrada Special Collection double compact disc release in 2013.

Also making its first appearance on vinyl is the Piero Montanari score to **La Casa 3** via Terror Vision. Better known as **Ghthouse**, the score previously saw release as a split CD with the **Frankenstein 2000** score from Italy's Beat Records in 1999. The movie got a Blu-ray release last year from Scream Factory, and the Umberto Lenzi flick quickly became a go-to for weirding out our friends. We're very excited for more Italian strangeness to make its way to your ears.





# BRAVE NEW WORDS

ED FORTUNE BRINGS  
YOU THE LATEST  
NEWS FROM  
THE WORLD OF  
GENRE LITERATURE



## Peter Newman Wins Gemmell Award

The winners of the 2016 Gemmell Awards have been announced. The fantasy novel awards are voted for by the general public and are named after the fantasy author David Gemmell, who died in 2006. The awards are well known for the unusual shape of the prizes; the Legend Award is an actual axe, which is a scale model of Snaga, the axe wielded by Gemmell's iconic hero Druss. The other two awards are statues equally inspired by Gemmell's works. The award ceremony tends to move around; this year it was at Fantasycon in Scarborough, UK. The winners were:

**Ravenheart Award** (Best Artwork): Jason Chan for **The Liar's Key** by Mark Lawrence.

**Morningstar Award** (Debut novel): **The Vagrant**, Peter Newman.

**Legend Award** (Best Novel): **The Liar's Key** by Mark Lawrence.

## Redshirts Win BFSA (and Don't Get Killed)

The British Fantasy Society has honoured the hard work of its volunteers as part of its annual British Fantasy Society Awards ceremony at Fantasycon, held in Scarborough. The Karl Edward Wagner Award, also known as the Special Award, was granted to 'The FantasyCon redshirts, past and present'. The award is only given to those considered to have made an important contribution to the genre or the Society. The winners include:

**Best Anthology:** **The Doll Collection**, ed. Ellen Datlow (Tor Books)

**Best Collection:** **Ghost Summer. Stories**, Tananarive Due (Prime Books)

**Best Comic/Graphic Novel:** **Bitch Planet**, Kelly Sue DeConnick, Valentine De Landro, Robert Wilson IV and Cris Peter (Image Comics)

**Best Fantasy Novel (the Robert Holdstock Award):** **Uprooted**, Naomi Novik (Macmillan)

**Best Film/Television Production:** **Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell**, Peter Harness (BBC One)

**Best Horror Novel (the August Derleth Award):** **Rawblood**, Catriona Ward (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

**Best Independent Press:** **Angry Robot** (Marc Gascoigne)

**Best Magazine/Periodical:** **Beneath Ceaseless Skies**, ed. Scott H. Andrews (Firkin Press)

**Best Non-Fiction:** **Letters to Tiptree**, ed. Alexandra Pierce and Alisa Krasnostein (Twelfth Planet Press)

## GRUESOMENESS IN AMERICAN HORROR FILMS is Out Now

Top STARBURST scribe Jon Towlson has released a new book, **The Turn to Gruesomeness in American Horror Films, 1931-1936**. Jon's book explores the rise of sensational content in movies of the era, and examines the way loopholes in the notorious Hays Code allowed for darker content.

## RJ Barker Lands AGE OF ASSASSINS Deal

RJ Barker, best known for his sharp wit on Twitter (@dedbutdrmg), has landed a three-book deal for his debut series **Age of Assassins**. It tells the story of Girtton Club-foot, a young man apprenticed to a master assassin, who is thrust into a world of politics and treachery when the queen hires the duo-not to cause an assassination, but to prevent one.

## New Category Added to Hugo Awards

As regular readers know, August 2017 will see the 75th World Science Fiction Convention (aka Worldcon) taking place in Helsinki. It will also be the first to feature a new Hugo Award category.

Fans voted in August 2016 to trial a new Hugo award for Best Series with an eye to introducing it in 2018. The Worldcon 75 committee have decided to leap ahead and use their special privilege to launch the award for next year. This has happened in the past, with the Best Graphic Novel category.

An eligible work for this special award is a multi-volume science fiction or fantasy story, unified by elements such as plot, characters, setting, and presentation. It's worth noting that Worldcon regular George R. R. Martin would be eligible for this award for **A Song of Ice and Fire**. Even though it's not finished.

## Doug Fratz (1952-2016)

Five-time Hugo nominee Doug Fratz has passed away. Best known for his fanzine and critical work, Fratz passed on September 27th. He is survived by his wife and two adult children.

## British Library Opens Harry Potter Exhibit

Never one to avoid a passing bandwagon, The British Library has opened an exhibition about the magic of Harry Potter, marking the twentieth anniversary of the publication of **Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone**. It will run until February 28th, 2018. The exhibition will include medieval descriptions of dragons and griffins as well as the real world origins of the philosopher's stone.

The whole thing will include wizard's grimoires, manuscripts and objects, and combine centuries-old British Library treasures with original material from Bloomsbury's and J. K. Rowling's archives.

## Eileen Younghusband (1921-2016)

Author Eileen Younghusband has passed away aged 95. She served in Fighter Command during the Second World War, and helped plot the launching points of the V2 rockets that threatened to devastate London. STARBURST readers will know her for her book **Eileen's War**, produced by genre publisher Candy Jar Books.

## 120 DAYS OF SODOM Joins the Penguin Classics Series

Once described as 'the most impure tale ever written since the world began', the Marquis De Sade's brutal work **120 Days of Sodom** is to join the Penguin Classic series. The story will be the first truly accurate translation from French to English, taken directly from the scroll De Sade made whilst incarcerated. The work, which is over 200 years old, is infamous for being dark, challenging and disturbing. It was previously banned in the UK until the 1980s.

Catch STARBURST's own book podcast, **Brave New Words**, via our website [starburstmagazine.com](http://starburstmagazine.com) and on twitter @radiobookworm.



# COMING SOON



## THE BURNING PAGE (THE INVISIBLE LIBRARY SERIES BOOK 3)

**AUTHOR:** GENEVIEVE COGMAN  
**PUBLISHER:** TOR  
**RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 15TH

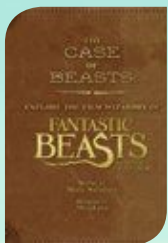
The **Invisible Library** series has been marvellous fun so far. Irene isn't your usual sort of Librarian. Instead, she works for the pan-dimensional Invisible Library, an entity which is dedicated to preserving books from all sorts of worlds. This time around, it seems she's trapped in the steampunk-style world that she calls home; her access to the Library is blocked. Worse still, the chaotic fey seem intent on destroying the world. Will she and her trusty assistant Kai be able to save the world? It is, after all, their home.



## HOWARD THE DUCK VOL. 2: GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD DUCK

**AUTHORS:** CHIP ZDARSKY, KEVIN MAGUIRE  
**PUBLISHER:** MARVEL  
**RELEASE DATE:** NOVEMBER 29TH

Howard the Duck has always been a difficult character to write. Few can match the late, great Steven Gerber for raw weirdness, and it's not as if Howard was ever meant to be a sympathetic character. However Chip Zdarsky comes close to matching Gerber's genius. Yet again, Howard finds himself in an environment he's not meant to be in, namely New York City. Whilst the heroes of the Marvel Universe attempt to do their hero thing, all Howard wants is a quiet life. The cosmos, however, has other plans.



## THE CASE OF BEASTS

**AUTHOR:** MARK SALISBURY  
**PUBLISHER:** HARPER COLLINS  
**RELEASE DATE:** NOVEMBER 18TH

Author Mark Salisbury has a pretty keen eye when it comes to putting together a behind the scenes book for a movie. **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them** promises to be a true visual spectacle, so it makes sense that they've gotten Salisbury to select the best possible element from the movie production to slam into a coffee table book. Expect film photography and artwork, and behind-the-scenes stories from cast and crew. It will also feature facsimile reproductions of props and paper ephemera from the movie, which adds to the magic.



## FIVE STORIES HIGH

**AUTHORS:** K. J. PARKER, SARAH LOTZ, ROBERT SHEARMAN, TADE THOMPSON, NINA ALLAN  
**PUBLISHER:** SOLARIS  
**RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 6th

Showcasing some of the finest modern horror authors working today, **Five Stories High** follows the residents of Irongrove Lodge, a place that may well spell doom for the unwary. Multi-award-winning editor Jonathan Oliver has brought together five talented writers to get inside the mansion and expose the ghosts that dwell within - both in the past and present - with this terrifying collection.



## PANEL TO THE SCREEN: STYLE, AMERICAN FILM, AND COMIC BOOKS DURING THE BLOCKBUSTER ERA

**AUTHOR:** DREW MORTON  
**PUBLISHER:** UNIVERSITY PRESS OF MISSISSIPPI  
**RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 30TH

With more and more comic books becoming the key inspiration behind the next big Hollywood blockbuster, it's high time that an in-depth look at the phenomenon was taken. Movies have always had a close relationship with sequential art, but as they grow closer, is it likely the one will forever change the other? Are comics becoming more and more like movies, in an effort to attract Hollywood money? And if so, what does this mean for the future of both media? Drew Morton promises to explore all this and more.



## THE CTHULHU CAMPAIGNS: ANCIENT ROME

**AUTHOR:** MARK LATHAM, RU-MOR  
**PUBLISHER:** OSPREY GAMES  
**RELEASE DATE:** NOVEMBER 17TH

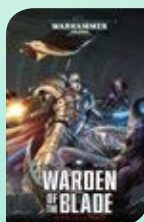
Hopelessness is one of the defining factors of the Cthulhu Mythos. However, the cosmic horrors that lurk in H. P. Lovecraft's imagination are little match for all of humanity's ingenuity. This is probably why the mythos works so well as a roleplaying game; it's tough to win. Osprey has decided to make things even more difficult by introducing a new twist to a Cthulhu game; setting it in Ancient Rome. With even less resources and a world filled with superstition and violence, the players will have their work cut out for them.



## MINIATURES: THE VERY SHORT FICTION OF JOHN SCALZI

**AUTHOR:** JOHN SCALZI, NATALIE METZGER  
**PUBLISHER:** SUBTERRANEAN PRESS  
**RELEASE DATE:** DECEMBER 31ST

It may come as a surprise to some that Twitter celebrity John Scalzi is actually an award-winning author, but apparently that's the thing he's famous for, rather than stirring up controversy. **Miniatures: The Very Short Fiction of John Scalzi** isn't 140 characters long, but it is filled with short fiction. The book brings together eighteen tales from the man behind the hit novel **Redshirts**. Each tale is no longer than 2300 words long, so at least it'll be a quick read. The book will feature four stories unique to this collection.



## WARDEN OF THE BLADE (GREY KNIGHTS)

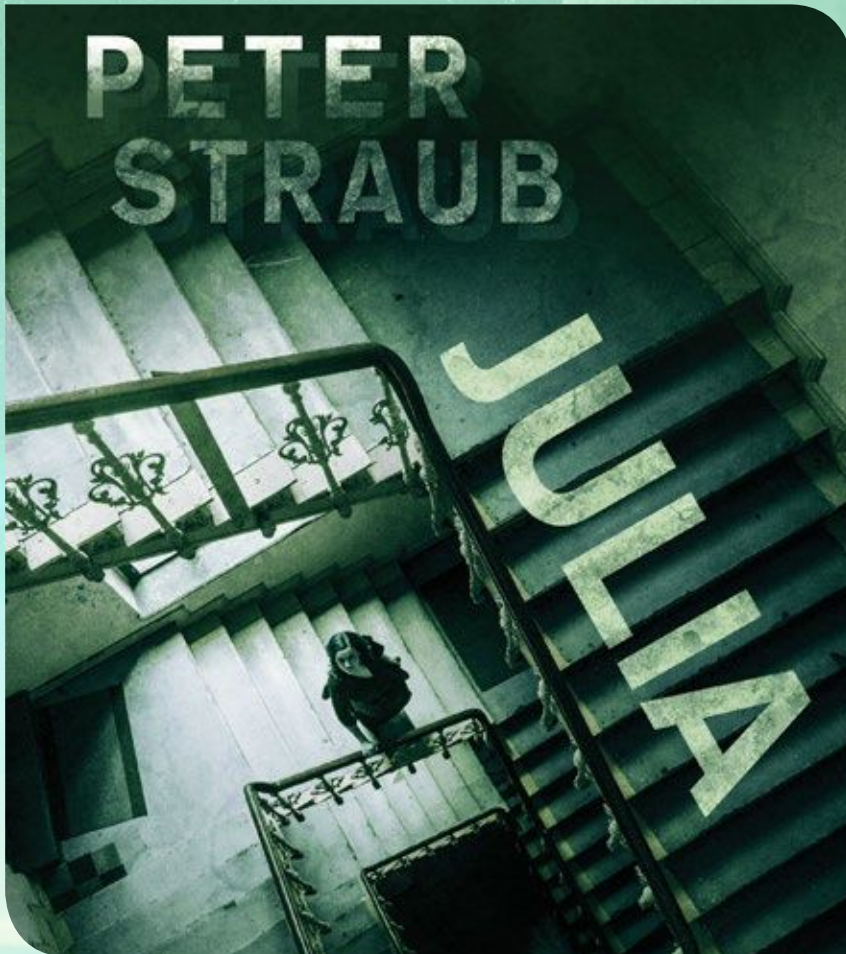
**AUTHOR:** DAVID ANNANDALE  
**PUBLISHER:** GAMES WORKSHOP  
**RELEASE DATE:** NOVEMBER 17TH

At its best, **Warhammer 40,000** is Gothic space opera. At its worst, it's advertising copy for toy soldiers that no one really plays with. David Annandale has the unenviable task of trying to inject some pathos into the near-perfect warrior that is Castellan Crowe of the Grey Knights. Crowe is a flawless soul, immune to evil in all forms and indomitable. Crowe is also the guardian of a Daemon sword that cannot be destroyed. Sounds like it could be a cracking tale or a predictable one. Either way, it's a must read.



# BOOK WORMHOLE

A MONTHLY PICK  
OF GENRE FICTION  
BY KATE FATHERS



a classic haunting and the story of a woman leaving her terrifying husband. Straub's use of the supernatural is excellent. Julia's haunting is never overdone, and it never gets silly, and the ghost's backstory adds a nice layer to its terror. If this was just a simple ghost story, it still would have been a great read. But where the novel (and the horror) truly excels, for me, is with Julia's ex-husband Magnus. He is an earth-bound horror, something realistic and relatable, and consequently even more terrifying. We have all heard stories about men like Magnus, men who are controlling and aggressive and who don't recoil when they think about beating their wives. Men who stalk the women who no longer want them. Men who break in to their ex's house. Men who seemed so charming until you married them. Magnus is the kind of man all women fear being with, and it's that reality that makes him more of a monster than Julia's ghost. Both the supernatural and the earthly contribute to Julia's isolation and her dissolving mental health, but I would argue that Magnus has the greater impact. For her, he has been a decades-long terror who it seems impossible to break away from. He threatens her desire to 'discover what being herself means'. At its heart, this is a novel about Julia's reclamation of herself - her quest to make sense of her marriage, make peace with the woman she was, and figure out the woman she wants to become. Both villains may threaten that discovery, but it is Magnus who is most frightening. It's Magnus who can actually take away her 'self'. It is Magnus who can, physically and psychologically, do the most damage. As a reader, that is more horrifying than any ghost.

There is only one thing in this book that doesn't work, and that's Straub's decision to make his kid ghost more disturbing by adding sexual situations. He's not unique in doing this, but honestly, it has never been my favourite technique. Furthermore, it's unnecessary in *Julia*. The ghost is creepy enough with its violence, and its sinister presence, and the method of its death. Sex doesn't add anything. In fact, it only serves to make Straub look a little unimaginative.

All in all, *Julia* is a fantastic book. It's frightening, and absorbing, and has some beautiful turns of phrase, and should appeal whether you love the horrors of humanity or the terror of the unknown afterlife. If you're a Straub fan and want to take a look at his earlier work, or just love a good scare, then this is the perfect book for you. There is also a film adaptation, *The Haunting of Julia*, starring Mia Farrow.

**W**hen most people think of Peter Straub, they think of *Ghost Story*. It's probably his most famous book, the one that appears on every list of 'favourite' or 'memorable' or 'guaranteed to scare you stupid' horror novels. But *Ghost Story* isn't his only horror novel, or even his first; that would be 1975's *Julia*.

After Julia Lofting leaves her husband, she buys a house in Kensington. The heaters are broken, and the old owner's furniture is a little worn, but it's hers. It's the first thing she's purchased for herself - just herself - in years. But there's something strange about this house, something that unsettles her sleep and the few guests she has. Something from its past that is still stalking the halls; something ghostly. Something vengeful. Something Julia is certain will eventually kill her.

This is one of the most truly creepy horror stories I've read, but not necessarily

for the reasons you think. *Julia* is a very well-written book, full of atmosphere and engaging characters and perfect pacing. It reminds me heavily of *The Ring*, with its combination of horror and murder mystery; the genesis of the ghost being just as important as the ghost itself. Wrapped around the main plot of Julia's haunting is her descent into madness, a common horror trope that Straub manages to make feel fresh and unique. Perhaps that's because Julia, right at the beginning of the book, tells the reader that it's okay if she 'goes crazy'. She simultaneously foreshadows what will happen to her and comforts us, and that's such a unique choice as comfort of any kind is usually foreign to horror fiction. But what makes this book really fascinating - and really frightening - is its two villains: the ghost and Julia's husband.

There are two stories at work in *Julia*:



THE LATEST RELEASES  
REVIEWED AND RATED

# REVIEWS



## PIRATE UTOPIA

**AUTHOR: BRUCE STERLING / PUBLISHER: TACHYON PUBLICATIONS / RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 1ST**

Whether or not you enjoy *Pirate Utopia* will depend upon one thing – how well you can appreciate an unconventional approach to stories. The very name and idea of this book is an oxymoron after all; combining Eden with a bunch of pillaging, raping corsairs seems like something which would only end in disaster. However, Sterling approaches this with an aim to explore a few personal views on the subject of politics and societal evolution, resulting in a

remarkably unique book.

In the middle of the Adriatic Sea, the world is changing. In the Regency of Carnaro, a population of futurists, dreamers and raiders seek to make their mark upon the world. Going so far as to raid their European counterparts, they seek to oppose capitalist and communist governments alike in a bid for world dominance.

The nation itself is founded upon a union of complete absurdity, twisting certain historical figures and names until the book's world is both familiar and alien at once. Almost reflecting the sort of "What if?" nature of comic books, you frequently find characters playing out wholly different roles than what life had planned for them. In this case, however, it is used to explore themes of possibility and rising power. It's oddly entertaining in its own way without coming across nearly as pulpy as you would expect, both due to Sterling's own narrative skills and often focusing upon lesser-known figures. It helps make his messages clear without entering the usual filibusters which typically ruin such tales.

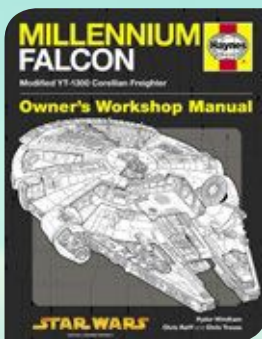
However, this book is also a very difficult one to get through for a few reasons. Foremost among them is the book's

structure, both in terms of prose and simple presentation. The sentences themselves are extremely brief, as are chapters, meaning you're rarely given enough time to truly immerse yourself in a particular scene before the book moves on elsewhere. What's more, the characters themselves can often seem fleeting at times, to the point where the book struggles to balance out such a large cast, and a few key moments are delivered with a surprisingly heavy-handed approach to storytelling.

Overall, it seems that Sterling's ideas can be appreciated far more than the actual book itself. What he crafts here is truly remarkable, offering a fascinating look into a rising society; how civilisation can be forged in blood and the danger of demagogues to such a place, dooming it even as they raise it to new heights. Yet, despite this, the story in question can be awkward to read and often heavy-handed, with a difficult prose to navigate. Read a few extracts and consider its themes, but seriously mull things over before you decide to buy this one.

CALLUM SHEPARD

★★★★★★★ 5



## MILLENNIUM FALCON MANUAL: 1977 ONWARDS

**AUTHOR: RYDER WINDHAM / ARTIST: CHRIS TREVAS, CHRIS REIFF / PUBLISHER: J H HAYNES & CO LTD / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW**

Haynes Manuals are a UK phenomenon. One of the typical rites of passage for a British teen is that after getting your hands on a (usually poor quality) second-hand car, the next thing you would buy is a Haynes Manual for that model of car. Each book contained detailed instructions "based on a complete stripdown and rebuild." The idea being that you could probably fix your old banger if needed.

It's appropriate, then, that Haynes has produced a book for the ultimate second-hand vehicle in the Star Wars universe, the Millennium Falcon. This "Owners Workshop Manual" deals specifically with the modified YT-1300 Corellian Freighter, but does go into some detail about the Corellian Engineering Corporation's YT series of freighters. It is not a full stripdown and rebuild, though, so if you're looking to replace the hyperdrive motivator on your old YT-1760, then you're probably on your own.

The book itself is a lovingly arranged affair. The first chapter breaks down the YT series, concentrating mostly on the YT-1300. Glossy model shots and schematics are the order of the day. The section on accessories is particularly delightful. There's something about the idea that the Falcon could be fitted with a shuttle or aquatic pontoons that just seems fun. The rest of the book focuses on the Falcon herself. We also get a good look at the ship's history; the old girl has certainly been around the block.

We get deck plans, schematics and profiles on pilots – namely Chewie, Lando and Han. Once we've gone through the overview, we get into the specifics. If you've ever wondered how the hyperdrive works or what all the buttons do on the various consoles, this book will cheerfully walk you

through the process. Basic operational and flight instructions are provided. This is a Haynes Manual, so it's very, very detailed. If you ever find yourself in the Star Wars universe, you'll be glad you've read this. The writing is warm enough to be entertaining, but it's designed as a manual first; the facts are the key thing here.

For those of you who care, many of the specific details about the Falcon's chequered past come from the James Luceno novel *Millennium Falcon*, which was written before Disney reset the canon. However, given that Luceno is now writing Star Wars novels for the new canon, it's a moot point. Which is good because it's a fun background and very entertaining to read. It's nice to imagine that the Falcon got up to hi-jinks before Han Solo got his hands on her.

Overall, this is an amazing artefact. Haynes have applied all of their know-how to bring to life one of the most iconic spaceships in science fiction and have delved deep to provide the most accurate and in-world explanations for all the quirks that the Falcon has. It's a great bit of fun and sure to delight any and all Star Wars fans.

ED FORTUNE

★★★★★★★★★★ 10





## **HORRORLOGY: A LEXICON OF FEAR**

**EDITOR:** STEPHEN JONES  
**AUTHOR:** VARIOUS  
**ILLUSTRATOR:** CLIVE BARKER  
**PUBLISHER:** JO FLETCHER BOOKS  
**RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW

Stephen Jones is one of the most reliable figures in horror literature

today. Jones' involvement in a project is almost a guarantee that the project is going to be worth your time, so it was with some excitement that we got our hands on *Horrorology: A Lexicon of Fear*.

As the name suggests, this is a horror anthology that brings together some of the more diverse voices from the horror writing community. The theme is words that evoke horror and fear, and though this is a pretty loose theme for an anthology, Jones has curated this collection to create a highly readable and accessible collection of spooky stories that will stay with the reader for days.

There are some nice touches; each story is prefaced by an illustration from the master of

fear himself, Clive Barker, and we get a definition of the cue word. The book is packed with notable authors throughout; this isn't a book that just has one well-known writer on the front and a lot of less well-known types inside. Instead, each tale is worth the collection on its own.

We kick off with Robert Shearman's *Accursed*, an excellent tale of family secrets and the fear of clowns. Clive Barker then chips in with *Afraid*, a rather explicit and short piece of work that contains Barker's trademark mix of lust and fear. Michael Marshall Smith jumps in with *Afterlife*, a story all about being careful what you wish for.

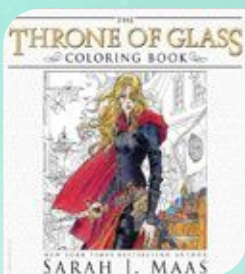
Pat Cadigan takes the word *Chilling* to a new level, mixing

fear with freezing, and *Decay* by Mark Samuels carries on the theme of wisdom, greed and folly that intertwines its way through this anthology. Other highlights include Joanne Harris's take on the word *Faceless*, Kim Newman's expansion of his *Anno Dracula* world with the word *Guignol*, and a great little tale from Muriel Grey on the nature of celebrity.

*Horrorology: A Lexicon of Fear* is the book to give the horror fan in your life this Christmas, it's simply that good. It also helps that the hardback is a lovely-looking thing crammed with spooky illustrations. Recommended.

ED FORTUNE

★★★★★★★★★ 9



## **THE THRONE OF GLASS COLOURING BOOK**

**AUTHOR:** SARAH J. MAAS  
**ARTIST:** YVONNE GILBERT, JOHN HOWE, CRAIG PHILLIPS  
**PUBLISHER:** BLOOMSBURY CHILDRENS  
**RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW

Sarah J. Maas' popular fantasy series *Throne of Glass* has an ever-growing cult following. The absurdly popular series is best described as 'Cinderella but with knives'. The first book (also

called *Throne of Glass*) follows the journey of Celaena, a teenage assassin in a corrupted kingdom with a tyrannical ruler. The series itself expands into the realms of conspiracy and is pretty much a tight, action-based series of thrillers set in a fantasy world. Maas' work is filled with detailed description and beauty. So it's interesting that they've decided to produce a colouring book.

The *Throne of Glass* Colouring Book is a sequence of scenes plucked from the entire series, with a couple of paragraphs on one page and then an accompanying illustration on the opposite page. All of your favourite heroes are present, of course. Celaena, Manon, Elide, Lysandra, Arobynn and Aedion are all lovingly rendered in black and white. The drawing of Fleetfoot the dog is particularly adorable, and the

accompanying text reminds the reader of the scene in which she first met the cute little puppy.

The scenes really don't tell the story of *Throne of Glass* at all. It seems they've been selected solely on the criteria of what makes a good picture for colouring-in. The line drawings range from the simple to the incredibly detailed. Unusually for a colouring book, there is no one page filled with the same image over and over again. It's not really a book for mindless doodling, it's a book that inspires you to make art (colouring is art. If you don't believe us, ask anyone who works in comics). It's a pretty thing even if you don't scribble in the pages, but it would be a bit of a waste if you didn't use it.

One of the marks of a good fiction is when you discover exactly how sharply and

quickly it's captured people's imaginations. Art, song, and fan-fiction are all ways that dedicated readers scoop up anything connected to a world. This is especially common with genre books, because well written genre tends to have strong central characters and powerful world building, and that's the sort of thing that sparks imaginations. The *Throne of Glass* Colouring Book is not a mindfulness book; it's not meant for relaxing doodling. Instead it's intended to draw you into the world created by Sarah J. Maas through the medium of coloured pens and pencils. One for the fans of the series. But with the TV series on its way, those fans may very well be on the rise.

ED FORTUNE

★★★★★★★★★ 8



## **HOW TO KEEP A WEREWOLF**

**AUTHOR:** FIONA BOWRON  
**PUBLISHER:** PORTICO  
**RELEASE DATE:** OUT NOW

Are you at a loss for what to do with your pet chupacabra? Not sure how to cope with an errant Kraken or what to feed Nessie? Author of *1001 Ways to Humiliate*

*Yourself and Others*, Fiona Bowron claims to have all the answers you need in this, her latest book.

Cryptozoology (the science of identifying and describing creatures from myth, folklore and legend) has always been a rich subject for both serious discussion and humorous expression; in her new book, Fiona Bowron has a crack at the latter – playing for laughs and taking a whimsical approach to the cryptid natural world, with varying degrees of success.

In putting together this book, Bowron has chosen her own categorisation scheme based on her perception of how easy or difficult a particular cryptid might be to manage, their suitability to domestic life and, oddly, a category based on their investment value.

The actual list of creatures is very impressive, ranging from the well-known beasts like Yeti and mermaids through lesser known examples like Orang Pendek and Dobhar-chu right up to little known legends including the giant bat Ahoon and noisy-sounding Ozark Howler. For all but the most obscure entries, Bowron gives advice on feeding, habitat and other nuggets of 'useful' information – where the information is based on actual documented research, it is frequently funny and insightful, but now and then the author tries to spin some spurious yarn of her own and, unfortunately, the joke wears thin.

The handy-sized hardback is illustrated in colour throughout by the art of Tom Jennings,

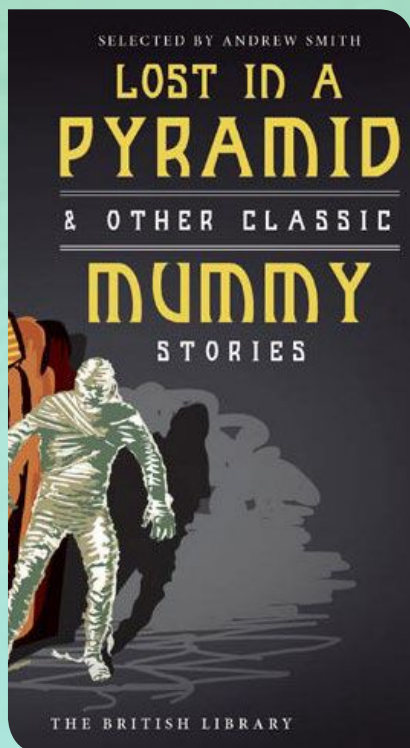
who has an impressive body of work including some lovely drawings in Jennifer Saunders' autobiography, *Bonkers*; Jennings takes a stab at artistically interpreting some of the better-known monsters and cryptobeasts, so it's a shame that the pictures, like the gags, are a little bit flat.

So, in all, this book is a pleasant confection alongside the main course of more serious publications in this field and it's possible the humorous veneer might last a little longer if you dip into it from time to time, as the author herself suggests, at your leisure.

SIMON BESSON

★★★★★★★★★ 6





## LOST IN A PYRAMID

AUTHOR: VARIOUS  
PUBLISHER: BRITISH LIBRARY  
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Lost in a Pyramid collects a dozen short stories published between 1869 and 1910, each featuring mummies in one way or another. A few of the tales are by writers a casual reader may be familiar with, such as Louisa May Alcott (of Little Women fame), Sherlock Holmes author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and Fu Manchu creator Sax Rohmer, the subject matter offering a differing approach to the works that made them famous. Others were written by writers whose fame has long since dissipated and a few whose true identities behind their pseudonyms remain a mystery to this day.

Being mummy tales, several of the stories involve curses, usually invoked by the thoughtless act of raiding treasures from tombs wisely left alone for millennia, with each take on the popular notion of the bandage-wrapped revenging undead differing from the others in some way, preventing the plots from becoming repetitive.

As the date range of the stories' initial publications coincides more or less with the zenith of the British Empire's reach and power, a certain colonial arrogance comes through at times, to the extent that you can actually hear the plummyest of "bally-ho, what-what?" accents sneering through waxed moustaches at the uncivilized savagery of Johnny Foreigner. This contemptible arrogance for any culture beyond that of the megalomaniacal island nation prevents any kind of empathy with the narrators,

despite such an attitude clearly intending the opposite effect.

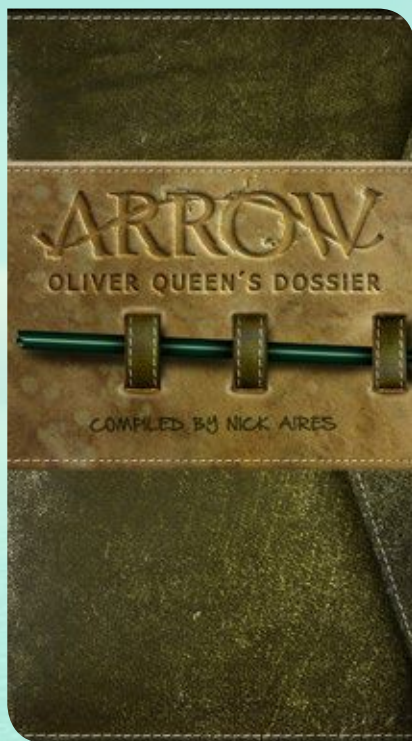
Another recurring theme is the casting of mummies not as forces of vengeance meting out punishment on glorified grave robbers, but as sultry and exotic maidens free with their appearance and affections who tempt steadfast and proper young gentlemen away from the pale and fragile English roses they are contrasted against. These seem to comment not on Britain's attitudes towards its colonies and protectorates, but on the social constraints of Victorian society.

Being written at a time when tales of the supernatural were far less prevalent, the structure of the stories often doesn't quite conform to what you'd expect, with some feeling it necessary to specify just how unbelievable the tale the reader is about to experience is, while several quite abrupt endings have little regard for explanations of exactly why the mystical shenanigans featured in them actually occurred.

While the collection is an interesting read and offers up varying perspectives on attitudes towards British colonialism amidst examples of a subgenre as it initially developed, much of the action appears a little tame to the modern reader. Something more for historical or scholarly value rather than true entertainment.

ANDREW MARSHALL

★★★★★★★☆☆ 7



## ARROW: OLIVER QUEEN'S DOSSIER

AUTHOR: NICK AIRES  
PUBLISHER: TITAN BOOKS  
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

If you're not familiar with The CW's smash hit television show on which this tie-in is based, let's recap. Oliver Queen is a billionaire playboy; spoiled, free from responsibility and at the time of his assumed demise, cheating on his girlfriend with her own sister. Oliver ditches his summer college classes to board an uber-yacht chartered by his father and brings his lover Sara Lance along for the ride, only for the ship to be destroyed following a storm that kills Sara and leaves Ollie and his old man marooned in the Pacific.

Before taking his own life, Ollie's father confesses to being complicit in a series of criminal undertakings and hands him a dossier that lists the co-conspirators responsible for the corruption that has devastated their home city. Five years later, Oliver is rescued from his (not so) deserted island and returns home. On the surface, he resumes his old reckless lifestyle, but at night he adopts a vigilante alter ego intent on bringing justice to those who have failed Starling City, known as 'The Arrow'.

Ollie's dossier may have taken a backseat in the more recent seasons, but to begin with it served as the McGuffin for the entire show. Most episodes from the first season were built around the information contained in the dossier as the Arrow set about methodically confronting the villains detailed in its pages. The dossier has only grown as the series has evolved,

adding new heroes and villains as documented by Oliver himself.

Nick Aires is no stranger to the Arrowverse, having previously helmed 2015's 'Arrow: Heroes and Villains', as well as authoring the official companion to fellow CW series Supernatural. The book is divided into three sections: Investigations, Equipment and Allies. 'Investigations' is the heaviest, listing the intel Oliver has collated against plenty of familiar enemies including Malcolm Merlyn, former flame Helena Bertinelli and more obscure villains like the sinister Dollmaker. The pages themselves are presented in scrapbook format; newspaper cuttings, police reports and Oliver's personal annotations added in post-it format make a nice touch. The 'Equipment' section will be fun for anyone who's ever wanted to craft their own bow and arrow, and 'Allies' serves as a good introduction to who's who for anyone new to the series.

Oliver Queen's Dossier is a fun accessory for die-hard fans of the series; lightweight enough to be enjoyed by younger Arrowheads, although older fans may prefer to wait for Season 5 to return in October to get their fix of one of DC's most compelling and commercially successful heroes.

TOMMY JAMES

★★★★★★★☆☆ 7





## THE FRIGHTFEST GUIDE TO EXPLOITATION MOVIES

AUTHOR: ALAN JONES

PUBLISHER: FAB PRESS

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The latest luxurious book from the wonderful publishers Fab Press is the perfect entry level to anyone looking to expand their viewing horizons from the mainstream as FrightFest co-director and all-around genre authority Alan Jones takes us through the murky world of exploitation films.

It's a catch-all phrase used too often – a little like 'cult' – but Jones has selected a grand assortment of titles that cover all aspects of what we label exploitation, from the very early days of cinema to the heady days of the VHS revolution, the time Jones

uses as a cut-off point due to the effect home entertainment was having on people actually leaving the house to see a film (thus causing closures of many if not all of the grindhouse-type venues that were these film's bread and butter).

The first quarter of this stunningly illustrated tome is dedicated to a beginners' A to Z of some of the things to know about exploitation cinema. This covers the history, some important titles, common themes and various sub-genres that the term covers. What some people often get confused about when thinking of exploitation is whether the movies are any good – there have been some genuine masterpieces that are pure exploitation, and it's certainly not a label that anyone should be ashamed of. Remember, the very act of advertising something is exploiting it. But, of course, that isn't the purpose of this work; oh no, we're here to find out about those seedy and sordid flicks that often filled the screens on 42nd Street and played at drive-ins up and down the USA.

The bulk of the book is the joy for most fans who already know the difference between pinku and giallo. Here, we have a little more information (although by no means in depth) on a brilliant selection of films, many truly obscure. There are some proper gems to read about for true connoisseurs of sleaze and crazy cinema, which are nestled up against the more obvious entries such as *I Spit on Your Grave* or *Maniac*. This section is presented in chronological order, so one can really chart the progression of what was deemed exploitative, and ironically see that by the time we get to the mid-eighties, when we're given relatively

mainstream fare as *Re-Animator* and *American Ninja*, the power to shock has certainly diminished, despite the improved effects or moderately bigger budgets. The choices in the earlier years are perfect; a great mix of non-obvious movies that have rarely seen the inside of video player, let alone a cinema. There are a few oddities in the mix – whether Hammer's *The Curse of the Werewolf* should qualify as exploitation is certainly open to debate, and there may be one or two too many women in prison flicks included (surely a couple is enough to show the variety?). These films are an acquired taste, though, and although many are not very well made, they all have something that makes them worth tracking down.

However, the real pleasure in the book is the illustrations. Each page is a visual treat, with vintage advertising posters, lobby cards (ask your parents), and stills that sell the films more than any words can do. The subject matter of the movies may have been there to shock and titillate audiences, but it's these glorious images that made them pay their money at the box office and drew them in. And it continues to do so now, as once can't help but be enraptured by the lurid artwork for the likes of *From Ear to Ear* or intrigued by *Poor Albert* and *Little Annie*. Not only do they not make them like that anymore, but they don't advertise them that way, either. A great introduction to a bygone age of filmmaking that leaves one longing for a time machine.

MARTIN UNSWORTH

★★★★★★★★★ 7



## H.R. GIGER

EDITOR: HANS WERNER HOLZWARTH

AUTHOR: ANDREAS J. HIRSCH

PUBLISHER: TASCHEN

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The memory cheats. Despite being regarded as one of the true watershed moments of fantasy cinema and revered in our pages ever since, *STARBURST*'s original review of 1979's

*Alien* was less than glowing. In the view of legendary star writer John Brosnan, it was "a very annoying film, because on one level, it is a masterpiece and on another it's a botched job". The botched bit? Well, it was just a stylised remake of the classics of his youth; but the masterpiece bit he got spot on: the *Alien* itself was an extraordinary nightmare come to life, like nothing before committed to celluloid, the ferociously original vision of one man: H.R. Giger.

As gateway drugs go, *Alien*, with its startling, Necronomicon creature, was incredibly potent. Yet it really only scratched the surface of Giger's dark labyrinth; this book rolls back the stone. It's difficult for us to describe a giant-sized book with a price tag of £650 as 'essential' when that sum will also buy you a family holiday or keep the wolf from the door for a month or two, but there's no denying that Taschen's new folio of Giger's work is the new benchmark in "definitive".

In classic Taschen style, the visuals are accompanied by multi-lingual essays that elegantly lead us through the fascination and disgust of Giger's singular path. It's all here; the nature of 'biomechanics', the psychology of the bizarre sexual imagery he employed, the dark shadows of the human psyche that even Francis Bacon as his most daring never touched but Giger considered home. It is also the story one man's response to the rapid pace of progress in the century he grew up in and how our increasingly wanton entanglement with technology became a

metaphor for the astonishing 'birth-machine' creatures he constantly returned to.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Giger the man was a paradox, in many ways shy of confronting reality. If he feared he was ill, he did not want his doctor to tell him; if he saw something disturbing on TV, he stopped watching. But he did not hide these fears away, allowing them instead to fester in his mind before their transmutation onto canvass.

Movie projects, and the effect of worldwide fame on his work, are extremely well covered. Giger's relationship with the film industry was never going to be an easy one, his art simply too overpowering to translate completely to the big screen. *Alien* achieved this most successfully as the wonderful designs and behind-the-scenes photographs here clearly illustrate, *Species* far less so. Then there were the projects that never reached the screen, the most famous of which, *Alejandro Jodorowsky's* tantalisingly out of reach version of *Dune*, getting lavish and justified attention.

Over 400 large-format pages, this is the artist's life from dawn till dusk, the exquisitely dark, energy of his work coming to life with stunning clarity. Taken as whole, this book is bludgeoning, liberating and bold; a truly astonishing body of work laid bare. OK, we'll say it: essential.

MICHAEL COLDWELL

★★★★★★★★★★★★★ 10





# SLEDGE-Lit.

**Saturday 26th November, 10am - 6pm at QUAD**

Ho ho ho! The festive season wouldn't be complete without Edge-Lit's Christmas special, which returns for its second year. Expect a healthy dollop of festive fun alongside a stuffed schedule of panels, workshops, book launches and much more besides, making this the ideal Xmas party for anyone with an interest in science-fiction, fantasy and horror writing.

More packed than a stocking on Christmas morning, bigger than Santa's belly and maybe – just maybe – even more exciting than cracking open the presents under the tree, Sledge-Lit is the perfect way for genre readers, writers and fans to kick off the festive season!

## **Guests of Honour:**

- Acclaimed and multi-award nominated science-fiction author Justina Robson
- Novelist and screenwriter Stephen Volk (Ghostwatch, Afterlife, Midwinter of the Spirit) with more names to be confirmed.

**Tickets £25** including goodie bag and access to all events on the day.





# VIEW FROM THE WATCHTOWER

GARETH EVANS PULLS  
MONITOR DUTY  
TO BRING YOU THE  
LATEST FROM  
THE WORLD OF  
COMIC BOOKS



writers and artists will be pooling their talents to create a collection of over 100 short stories. All of the proceeds will be donated to 'Equality Florida' so that they can be used to not only help victims of the shootings, but the survivors and their families too. If any of our readers are interested in buying this, it can already be pre-ordered via IDW's website. This project deserves to do well, and I hope that it does. What happened in Orlando was an atrocious crime, and it warms my heart to see the comic book industry do what they can to support the people who were attacked because of who they love.

Also this month, we have had two big announcements from DC. Since Rebirth launched a few months ago, fans may have been wondering when the next big DC event may be coming, and they now have their answer. DC has announced that *Justice League vs. Suicide Squad* will be taking place during December and January. According to DC, the confrontation will be the result of the Justice League discovering the existence of the Suicide Squad.

A promo image for the event has been released, and it is interesting to note that it doesn't actually depict the two sides fighting. Instead, the image appears to show Batman and Harley Quinn (both adorned with weapons from the other's respective team) supporting each other against a common adversary. It's possible that this crossover may be another example of two sides fighting only to join forces to combat a greater threat.

As stories go, *Justice League vs. Suicide Squad* is one worth telling, but I have to wonder if this is motivated by DC's current movie efforts. *Justice League* is due for release next year, and *Suicide Squad*'s box office performance almost guarantees a sequel. It seems very likely that this team-up has been calculated to take advantage of recent movie buzz and as a way of keeping these characters topical ahead of their next films.

The other big announcement was *The Death of Hawkman*, a six-issue miniseries being released over October and into November. This story will see the titular Hawkman team up with Adam Strange and presumably result in his death. For those readers who aren't familiar with Hawkman, dying and being reincarnated is kind of his thing (as depicted in the TV series *Legends of Tomorrow*). Death has become such an overused plot device in superhero comics that it is almost admirable that DC is revolving

**W**hen writing up a column such as this, it can be difficult to decide which of the news items should be reported. Two pages may seem like a lot at first, but a writer will quickly learn that it isn't enough to cover all the various announcements that have been made within the comic book industry

that month. This month, I have chosen to open with a topic that I feel is of particular importance.

In December, DC and IDW will be publishing *Love is Love*, an anthology of stories written in honour of the victims of the horrific shooting that took place in a gay nightclub earlier this year. Over 200





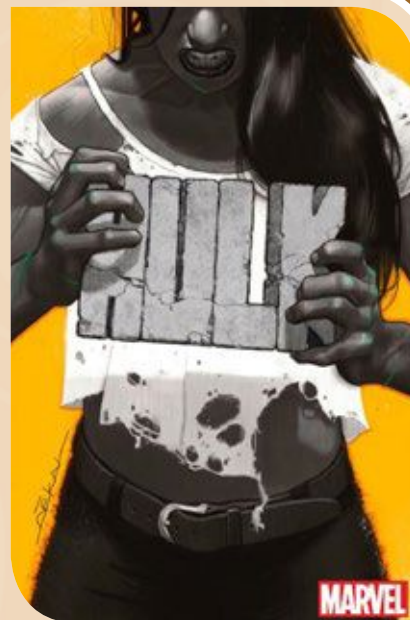
their next one around a character for whom plot device deaths are part of his fundamental narrative.

Over at Marvel, *Civil War II* is continuing in much the same manner as a typical 'event'. Issue five ended with another character being killed off as a way to heighten the tension after the fight that dominated the issue. Reading this comic, I actually feel sorry for Tony Stark. At several points throughout *Civil War II*, he has tried to talk with Carol Danvers to explain why trying to use Ulysses Cain's powers to stop incidents before they happen is a terrible idea and she doesn't seem to be able to offer a counter argument much more complex than "I'm right, shut up". In the same issue, he tried talking to Star-Lord about this only to be told that the latter thought that Ulysses' powers were pretty cool, despite the proof that he isn't actually



predicting the future so much as making an educated guess. By this point, I wouldn't be surprised if he were to start beating his head against the wall; based on how everyone around him is acting at the moment, it would probably be more productive than anything he has done so far.

*Civil War II* won't be over for a few months, but we already know one thing that will come of it. In December (I seem to be saying that a lot this issue), Jennifer Walters will be getting a new comic book series. Unlike her previous comics, this one will be dropping the 'She' prefix, and will simply be called Hulk. Over the course of *Civil War II*, She-Hulk has lost her cousin and has almost been killed. Far from being swept under the rug and ignored, the impact of these traumatic developments on She-Hulk will be explored in her new comic; hence the new



title. Call me optimistic, but I am hopeful that the weighty topics of the death of a loved one and facing your own death will be handled positively in the upcoming series. For once, it actually feels like the promised fallout from an event might actually mean something.

Well, it looks like we have come to the end of this issue's **View from the Watchtower**, and with only five items discussed, hopefully readers will understand my point about picking which topics to explore. Based on what I've discussed this time, I can already tell that comic book fans face the prospect of an expensive winter ahead of them. Let's hope the upcoming stories are worth it.

Gareth Evans can be contacted at: [gareth.evans@starburstmagazine.com](mailto:gareth.evans@starburstmagazine.com) and tweeted @OneTrueGareth





# REVIEWS

THE LATEST COMIC  
BOOK RELEASES  
REVIEWED AND RATED



## **GRIFF GRISTLE: HERE BE MONSTERS**

WRITER: ROBIN JONES, MIKE SAMBROOK /  
ARTIST: RORY DONALD / PUBLISHER: MADIUS  
COMICS / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Here Be Monsters, the first Kickstarter project from Madius Comics, introduces the character of Griff Gristle. He's a salty old sea dog, suitably rough, ready and thick of beard, the type of veteran who has been there and seen it all. There's danger of cliché here, but in the hands of Madius creators Jones and Sambrook, Griff rises above such tropes, and it is gradually revealed that he's more than he seems; not all of his experiences have been entirely successful, nor without deep loss. In just one issue, the writers are able to create a mythology that surrounds him, makes him not only interesting, but vulnerable too.

The story will feel familiar to anyone who has seen John Carpenter's *The Fog*, but again the writers play with our expectations, giving readers a fresh take on a traditional ghost story. While Griff rightly takes centre stage, those around him exist as more than means to further the plot or deliver exposition; they engage and interact with the protagonist, often offering conflicting views on the nature of corruption and the need to perform bad deeds for the right reasons. In this, it isn't only the water that's deep.

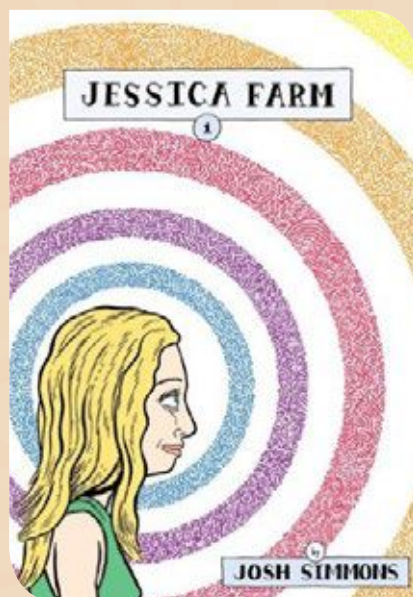
Art duties on *Here Be Monsters* are performed by Rory Donald, who does an excellent job. He has a similar chunky style to Mike Mignola, lots of straight lines and sharp

angles, but he brings the script to vivid life and uses shade wonderfully. Anyone who has wondered what the work of the Madius team would be like in colour (this reviewer included) need ponder no more; simply put, it's wonderful. Donald uses colours to great advantage, creating appropriate atmosphere in every scene, especially those set underwater. There's a stunning splash page giving a view above Griff's boat that is so well rendered that it almost looks to be in three dimensions. Like his writers, Donald is clearly a talent to watch.

With several quality issues of *Papercuts* & *Inkstains* behind them, comic fans had faith in the Madius team and ensured this Kickstarter project was more than successfully funded. Their reward for that faith is a high-quality comic that epitomises the commitment and talent of the independent comic scene in the UK. It's a glory to behold, a story that rises above any potential clichés, and remains entertaining throughout. With an epilogue that promises more to come, it's good to know that timbers will keep shivering as the voyages of Griff Gristle continue.

ALISTER DAVISON

★★★★★★★★★★10



## **JESSICA FARM VOL 1 & 2**

WRITER & ARTIST: JOSH SIMMONS / PUBLISHER:  
FANTAGRAPHICS / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Jessica Farm, a fantasy comic book series created by Josh Simmons, is a mix of serial adventure, physiological horror and fantasy. This series is very unique, with Simmons creating one page a month for 50 years. So far he has released two volumes around 95 pages each, and the series so far has proven to be a treat with comic book fans.

Jessica Farm takes the form of a very indie comic book series. Drawn in a simplistic style with black and white sketches, Simmons clearly shows that it is the story that counts, rather than the detail. Volume One is a confusing mix of sketches; we follow Jessica throughout the farm as she suddenly jumps through holes and meets some very strange and remarkable creatures. Just as we were unsure as to whether there was actually going to be a distinguishable plot within this series, it all comes together towards the end of Volume One. It is very much a set-up for the future of the series, with this volume introducing the reader to the bizarre world and the problems and stake.

Volume Two then takes the reader into a strange but uniquely told fight scenes. Simmons uses his simplistic

art style to bring to life some of the distinguishable creatures he has created. This volume is very much centred on a serial fight scene that takes place across the farm and is truly one of the strangest comics we have ever had the pleasure of reading.

Jessica Farm is a fun-filled comic of action and serial comedy; it isn't so much centred on a plot, but just tries to take the reader on an escapist journey into a fantasy land that is just truly really strange. The characters and creatures John Simmons has created are truly original. It is quite hard to describe the storyline, but summed up briefly, it's a story of a girl who finds herself on an adventure with many unusual creatures. This comic is clearly for adults with some of its more weird moments, but it is nevertheless a fun comic to read with many chuckles to be had along the way. We truly look forward to the next volume in the series, although we do have an eight-year wait until 2024!

ANDREW MUSK

★★★★★★★★★★8





## CRY HAVOC, VOL 1: MYTHING IN ACTION

WRITER: SIMON SPURRIER / ARTIST: RYAN KELLY,  
NICK FILARDI, LEE LOUGHRIDGE / PUBLISHER:  
IMAGE COMICS / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Despite its subtitle being a terrible pun (which this reviewer took weeks to get...), this is an intelligent, gritty and thoughtful exploration of themes that you might have thought the urban fantasy genre had already trodden to death.

Lou is a fierce, blue-haired busker,

buffeted by events outside of her control. The book begins with her on one side or another of a barred cage (but which? Captor or captive?) and we follow the events leading up to and from that point, from being mugged by a werewolf to her emerging lycanthropy to special operations with a team of similarly mythically-charged misfits, on a Heart of Darkness-style mission to track down a rogue mythic.

If that plot sounds confusing, then we should warn you, we've only scratched the surface. But throughout, the complex plot, packed with interesting new ideas on the theme of shapeshifting, parallel realities and lycanthropy, is deftly handled and well paced, leaking just enough new details to keep you reeling, giddy, and breathless without getting lost.

Cry Havoc has honesty in its depiction of grime, sexuality and hipster-ridden Britain (well... central London, anyway), rooting the plot in a recognisable everyday before taking off into the more fantastical. And the fantastical is pretty densely realised too. Spurrier and Kelly have clearly done their research into the varieties of mythic monsters around the world, not settling for just werewolves (or barghest) and vampires (we didn't notice any, not in the conventional sense). Nearly every mythic we encounter has their own unique look, qualities and powers.

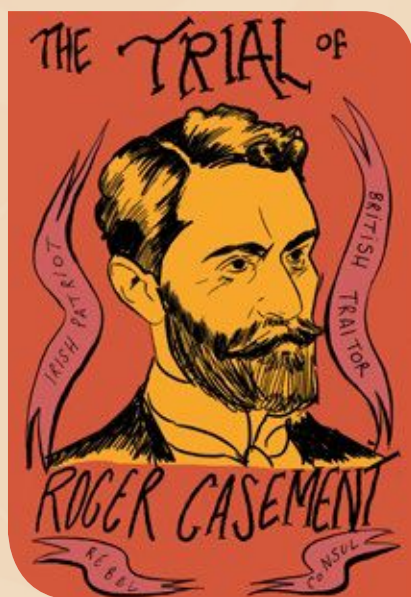
Throughout, it has a dry and dark sense of humour and a fundamentally good heart. There is plenty of gore and nudity but, by and large, it doesn't feel gratuitous. In fact, it would have felt more insincere if the sheer volume of blood and guts shed had been hidden from us.

If there are moments when Cry Havoc thinks it is cleverer than it really is, it is also far more thoughtful and immaculately plotted than you could ask for, from what promises to be a highly original and inspiring series. The fact that we struggle to imagine where it could go from here is only a good sign. This reviewer has every faith in you, Cry Havoc. Just make your next subtitle a pun I can get in less than a week.

There are moments, particularly towards the end, where the sheer volume of ideas creates a dense and slightly confusing porridge. However, the pure strength of characterisation carries the reader through any technobabble and any plot points missed just encourage what we suspect would be an extremely satisfying second (or third or fourth...) reading.

ED FORTUNE

★★★★★★★★★★ 9



## THE TRIAL OF ROGER CASEMENT

WRITER & ARTIST: FIONNUALA DORAN / PUBLISHER:  
SELFMADEHERO / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Roger Casement's tale is well known throughout history, with many biographies written about him. However, his story is now told through this new graphic novel by Fionnuala Doran, which charts the rise and fall of this powerful and historic character.

At first, the graphic novel can be difficult to follow, as the set-up changes from different time periods to try and provide the reader with the sufficient information required to enjoy the story. This adaptation of his life follows Roger Casement from his many successes from being honoured for the 'Casement Report' on the situation in the Congo to his eventual knighthood following his efforts in Peru. However, the story then charts the eventual downfall of this famous humanitarian. Although Roger Casement's many humanitarian reports earned him a reputation as a kind-hearted man, his move for German backing to secure an independent Ireland and his eventual return home saw him eventually arrested. This adaptation really focuses on his arrest, incarceration, and trial. It also shows the 'Black Diaries' and how they contributed to Casement's fate.

This story is very much politically focused, but also contains some very

moving character elements. In particular, the court room scenes are emotionally engaging and tragic. However, a brief introduction to Roger Casement may be needed for people not familiar with him, or else the story may be difficult to follow. Luckily, the author has provided a brief timeline of Casement's life at the back of the book, which provides some background context to the story.

There is some uncertainty surrounding the case of Roger Casement, and elements of potential forgery of the Black Diaries have pointed towards the British authorities ensuring Casement's trial was swiftly settled. This graphic novel does great justice to Casement's life whilst trying to put forward an engaging story. Fionnuala Doran has done a splendid job of interpreting a historical figure's life into a work of art, telling the tale through black and white drawings that truly capture the tone of the story. This adaptation will allow many readers to discover a historical figure for the first time. A hauntingly true tale of belief and tragedy.

ANDREW MUSK

★★★★★★★★★★ 8



# Pokey-Con

A handy guide to denizens of your favourite convention. Cut out, collect and keep and use these to identify your Pokey-Con creature.

Note: Throwing balls at Pokey-Con simple annoys them



23

**That Blake Off The Telly From That Show (TBOTTFS)**



Rarity: Common

Once the darling of tea-time telly, TBOTTFS wants their 15 minutes back. Easily placated by telling them how amazing they were in that show, but don't mention reality TV...

Favourite Drink: Gin

Special Abilities: Nostalgia, Tantrums, Can sign anything.  
Fame: 3, Weirdness: 3, Regret: 9, Costume: 8, Power: 5, Crunchiness: 3

14

**Alien disguised as cosplayer**



Rarity: Quite Rare

A genuine alien monster, who has landed in the wrong place. No one seems to have noticed that they're a blood sucking fiend from the planet X. Instead, they've just been told to join the queue and wait their turn.

Favourite Food: Human Flesh. Or over-priced hotdogs

Special Abilities: Acid For Blood, Terrible Fashion Sense..  
Power: 8, Fame 0, Weirdness: 10, Regret: 3, Costume: 10, Silliness: 10

03

**Mother of Dragons**



Rarity: Never common. Thank you very much.

The Mother of Dragons refuses to let a simple thing like triplets get in the way of a good geeky convention. These adorable little puke machines are every bit as terrifying as genuine dragons.

Favourite Thing: A good night's sleep would be nice

Special Abilities: Withering Glare, Projectile Vomit

Power: 7, Fame 3, Weirdness: 3, Regret: 6, Costume: 8, Smell: 7

17

**Cosplay Fix It Ninja**



Rarity: Uncommon

They're the hero ~~of~~ your convention deserves, but not the one it needs right now. Until your costume falls apart. And then they appear, gaffer tape and sewing needle in hand. What a hero.

Favourite Thing: To help out their fellow geeks

Special Abilities: Fix Everything, Humbleness, Sarcasm  
Power: 5, Fame 2, Weirdness: 4, Regret: 2, Costume: 3, Awesomeness: 10

Credits:  
Art: Rylan Cavell  
Text and Concept: Ed Fortune  
Layout and Design: Mike Smith



HI, MY NAME'S SAM,  
AND THIS IS MY BUDDY JAKE.  
WE WORKED TOGETHER ON THE  
SHOWCASE STRIP "THE RIPLE EFFECT"  
IN ISSUE 497 OF STARBURST, BECAUSE  
WE'RE BOTH CREATORS OF COMICS  
AND WE WANTED TO SHOW THE WORLD  
WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT.

MY MISSION HAS ALWAYS  
BEEN TO CREATE COMICS THAT  
EXCITE AND PUSH THE BOUNDARIES  
OF WHAT COMICS CAN BE.  
I GET A BUZZ FROM DOING  
THINGS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN  
DONE BEFORE. RICH JOHNSTON AT  
BLEEDING COOL THOUGHT MY  
MUSICAL COMIC (THAT ACTUALLY SINGS)  
WAS "REMARKABLE" AND  
"A BRAVADO PERFORMANCE".

COMIC HEROES MAGAZINE GAVE MY  
SUPERHERO COSTUME COMIC THAT  
UNFOLDS OUT INTO A UTILITY BELT  
AND MASK "4 AND A HALF STARS  
OUT OF 5", AND WHEN I LAUNCHED  
MY APP 'MOBILIA' LAST YEAR,  
STARBURST MAGAZINE SAID  
"GARDNER'S CRACKED INTERACTIVE  
COMICS WITH A FLAIR AND HONESTY  
THE LIKES OF DC AND MARVEL  
JUST HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT".

I WAS ALSO HEAD WRITER  
AND EDITOR ON THE TAMAR BRIGADE,  
A PUBLICATION THAT UNITED THE  
MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE  
SOUTH WEST INTO A SINGLE CONTINUITY;  
WORKING WITH LOCAL ARTISTS  
AND WRITERS IN THIS REGION  
OF THE COUNTRY.

I'VE ADAPTED WORK BY  
BRITISH FANTASY  
AWARD WINNER JOHNNY MAINS,  
AND CREATED A POSTER COMIC  
WITH JAKE CALLED SHOOTING  
GALLERY THAT I'M NOW  
ADAPTING INTO A SCREENPLAY  
FOR BLACK ARROW PICTURES.

OVER TO YOU JAKE!

JAKE ROWLINSON,  
ILLUSTRATOR, ANIMATOR,  
AND LOTS OF OTHER WORDS  
THAT END IN 'ATOR.

I'VE BEEN DRAWING EVER SINCE  
I COULD CRAWL, WAY BACK IN THE  
PRIMORDIAL SOUP OF 1988,  
GROWING UP ON A HEARTY DIET OF  
FRANK FRAZETTA, JUDGE DREDD AND  
RAY HARRYHAUSEN.

I STARTED TAKING IT ALL A BIT MORE  
SERIOUSLY AFTER I GRADUATED,  
WITH A FIRST CLASS HONOURS DEGREE  
IN (BA) DESIGN ILLUSTRATION,  
FROM PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY IN 2011.

SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN WORKING  
FREELANCE TO CREATE ANIMATIONS,  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS, BAND LOGOS,  
FESTIVAL BRANDING, EDITORIAL CARTOONS,  
BEER LABELS AND PUBLIC ARTWORKS.  
MY MAIN LOVE, HOWEVER, IS AND ALWAYS  
HAS BEEN THE CRAFT OF  
COMIC BOOKS.

MY WORK WITH SAM  
HAS BEEN LONG-LISTED  
FOR THE BRITISH COMIC AWARDS,  
REQUESTED AND ARCHIVED BY  
THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM,  
AS WELL AS RECEIVING CONSIDERABLE  
APPRAISAL ON RADIO,  
ONLINE AND IN PRINT.

I WAS SELECTED BY THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ILLUSTRATORS  
AS A NEW TALENT IN THEIR  
IMAGES 36 PUBLICATION,  
AND MY WORK HAS BEEN  
NOMINATED FOR BOTH THE HERITAGE  
AWARD AND VC'S ENTERPRISE  
AWARD.

TO SEE MORE OF  
OUR WORK, CHECK OUT;  
SAMGARDNERJRCOMICS.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK,  
JAKEROWLINSON.BLOGSPOT.CO.UK

CONTACT US AT;  
SAM@P1000@HOTMAIL.COM,  
SAXONJAXON@HOTMAIL.CO.UK

OR HUNT US DOWN ON TWITTER;  
@CAPEFEARSAM,  
@JAKEROWLINSON

WE'RE ALWAYS INTERESTED  
IN NEW COMMISSIONS,  
IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU'VE SEEN,  
GET IN TOUCH!

**SAM GARDNER JR**

**JAKE ROWLINSON**



# ANIME-NATION

A MONTHLY  
ROUND UP FROM  
THE WORLD OF ANIME  
AND MANGA FROM  
LITTLEANIMEBLOG.COM'S  
DOMINIC CUTHBERT



## BLOOD LAD Author Bids Farewell to Manga, Teasing Next Project

Yuki Kodama ended his vampire comedy manga in the September issue of Kadokawa's **Young Ace** magazine. But fans need not fear, as he was quick to take to Twitter to bid farewell to the franchise, but also to assure us to be patient for news of a follow-up. Kodama launched the series in **Young Ace** in 2009, where it ran for seventeen volumes before its end, inspiring a 2013 anime from Brain's Base.

## A CERTAIN MAGICAL INDEX Scribe Churns Out Monthly Novel for Two Years Straight

In news that'd make the most dedicated writers go red in the face, Kazuma Kamachi, author of **Heavy Object** and **A Certain Magical Index**, has reportedly released a new light novel every month for the past two years. He's now heading into the third year of this spurt, with no signs of slowing down. We've never felt so lazy!

## SHONEN JUMP confirms new GINTAMA anime surprising no one

None of us were surprised when **Shonen Jump**'s cloak and dagger teasing turned out to be a new series for the beloved **Gintama** franchise. Hideaki Sorachi's manga has been ongoing since 2004 and is now in its final arc, though he's unsure whether it will end this year or the next. The anime, on the other hand, is celebrating its tenth anniversary, with the most recent series coming to an end in March. The **Gintama** live action movie has wrapped filming, and will open in Japan in 2017.

## Netflix's DEATH NOTE Cites Source Material and Michael Mann's HEAT

Adam Wingard, director of Netflix's live-action **Death Note**, has described the film as "a return for me to go back to doing something kind of weird", likening the experience to creating a 'live action anime'. He even cited anime itself as an adult-oriented medium. **Fantastic Four** scribe Jeremy Slater, meanwhile, said the film aspires to the manga's 'moral complexity'. Drawing similarities to Michael Mann's **Heat**, "except with teenagers, and one of those teenagers has superpowers", Slater also notes the film "used quite a bit of my script, as a jumping off point". He'd penned early drafts of **Death Note** before leaving for **The Exorcist** TV show.

## As Re:ZERO Ends, Light Novel Author Wonders What If...

All great things must end, and so it was with **Re:ZERO**, the exceptional anime inspired by Tappei Nagatsuki and Shinichiro Otsuka's light novels. As Nagatsuki bids farewell to the show, the author's also been reflecting on the 'what ifs', imagining the different turns the story could have taken. The IF chapters will soon come together in a full 290-page novel, to be released as a bonus for all Japanese fans who buy the anime on Blu-ray. Featured heavily is the idea that Subaru and Rem fled Lugunica for a more peaceful life in the country of Kararagi. If only...

## Crunchyroll and FUNimation Partner in the Name of Anime

No need to pinch yourself, this really is happening. Anime streamers and distributors Crunchyroll and FUNimation have announced a partnership that aims to 'improve the fan experience and grow the current reach of anime'. With Crunchyroll focusing on streaming subtitled shows, and FUNimation expanding its initiatives in Broadcast Dubs and the home video market, they will increasingly share their titles with one another to give us even more ways to watch more anime.

## THE ECCENTRIC FAMILY Sequel Scheduled

The whimsy, charm and stylish visuals of studio P.A. Works' **Eccentric Family** won us over in droves, and thirteen episodes was never going to be enough. Fortunately, the second series has finally been announced, marking the studio's first ever sequel. Masayuki Yoshihara is returning to direct, with Kōji Kumeta back on character designs. The first season's main cast will also return to their familiar roles.





A MONTHLY  
FOCUS ON  
THE COSTUMED  
ROLE-PLAY SCENE AT  
FAN CONVENTIONS  
AROUND THE WORLD

# COSPLAY CATWALK



## SCOTT BERRY

Something a little different this month, as we chat to someone who has made a name for themselves on the other side of cosplay world - behind the camera! Scott Berry describes himself as a costographer, we find out how he got started...

### STARBURST: How did you get started in the cosplay scene?

Scott Berry: I got started in the cosplay scene before I knew it as cosplay! I worked security at Chicago sci-fi conventions and an associate of mine and I decided to dress up. We built an 8ft tall Borg cube and made our custom Borg costumes. I am 6ft 8in tall so I was noticeable as a Borg. We entered the costume contest, we came out thru the backroom loading door, and we walked behind our Borg cube to a roaring crowd. We 'parked' the cube and each of us walked out from either side of the cube, the crowd was deafening! We took best show and it was a lot of fun! I always made my

Halloween costumes, sometimes for friends too. I wasn't till I moved to Las Vegas that I caught the bug per say and had custom costumes made for me and began shooting for fun. Then I decided to do compositing, with my art background I discovered my love for Photoshop and ran with it.

### And that's something you do a little different, in that you specialise in photographing cosplayers, tell us a little about how that came about and what it entails...

I love the infinite possibilities working with cosplayers brings to my photography, cosplayers vs. models in cosplay, cosplayers know the characters inside and out so the





posing comes naturally and my job is to capture that. Models feel silly and can't quite grasp the concept, this is changing with the popularity of the cosplay world with sci-fi and comic book influence being more wide spread. I enjoy it, it is a lot of fun to create a one-of-a-kind image and my cosplay goal with my photography is photo realism.

#### Have there been any particularly memorable shoots you could tell us about?

Hands down the most memorable shoot is when I got Margie Cox from Atlanta to Las Vegas, twice! We shot all over Vegas in full crew and cosplay mode from Fremont St to out in front of Caesar's Palace as Wonder Woman! The second trip I had a full call sheet of scheduled shots I wanted and Margie and I nailed them all!! I am a carpenter by trade so I built my own props and sets for Margie to submerge herself in and get the poses we needed.

#### Who would be your perfect character to photograph?

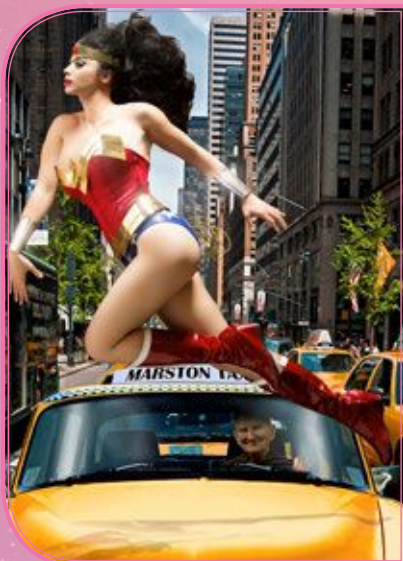
I have an affinity for DC so my perfect character to photograph is Supergirl, which I suppose is why she is so apparent in my work. Her powers enable all kinds of composite ideas! I am limited by availability and geography as I do not travel to cons. I am open to all characters as I have shoot ideas for several like Sue Storm and most definitely Star Wars. I went outside the box and did a 'Samus' shoot with Momokun Cosplay and I had a blast with the research and the final composite turned out great!

#### Who would you love to be able to dress as if you went out to a convention as a cosplayer?

I have been pondering what to cosplay as while at a con for a long time. There are several that I like but my size limits what I can pull off - haha! I would have to decide whether or not to be a costographer or a cosplayer first!

MARTIN UNSWORTH

Check out more of Scott's work at [instagram.com/costographer\\_lv](https://www.instagram.com/costographer_lv).



## READER'S COSPLAY "THE SIGNLESS ONE"



We chat to Mitch, who goes under the name The Signless One Cosplay, about her passion for the costumes and conventions...

#### STARBURST: How did you get started with cosplaying?

Mitch: I first got into cosplay back when the first MCM Scotland was taking place, I was in 5th year of high school I believe, so that would have been in 2014. My first cosplay was atrocious. I made it in a night and I had to wear the shirt backwards as I had no way of cleaning off my mistake, so I had to walk around with a large grey splotch of dried fabric paint on my back. I had no wig so I had to use my natural hair to hide the fact I was wearing a hair band with a pair of horns attached and at this point in time I had no idea how to correctly apply body paint so the paint was patchy and came off

whenever I touched things. It was a horrible time in all honesty. I am glad that I am at a point where I can hold things covered in body paint without the risk of transfer.

#### Who is your favourite character to dress as?

My favourite character to cosplay is Rabbit from *Steam Powered Giraffe*. The body paint is worth the effort in all honesty. I was in Lincoln for Asylum Steampunk Festival and I was constantly being stopped by photographers for photos. I love acting as Rabbit as she is a clockwork robot who malfunctions constantly so it is funny to be acting in character and just randomly malfunction. People's reaction to that makes me incredibly happy. She has also helped me break out of my shell and really up how I perform as a character.

#### How long do you spend making the costumes and how much do you usually budget for?

I spend anywhere from £20 to well over £100 on my cosplays. It really varies as sometimes eBay is my best friend and sometimes it really isn't. For example, my hat for Rabbit would have been well over £50 for it in a shop, but on eBay it was much, much cheaper. So it really is your friend. As for time, there is no words for the length of time my cosplays take. I'd say facepainting alone takes an hour or more whenever I am applying it without distractions. Making the costumes varies too, but I get lucky and have some really amazing friends to help me.

#### Do you have any future cosplaying plans?

My future plans? Gosh - that is a long list. I have three in the near future that I would really like to do. Princess Rayfa from *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney - Spirit Of Justice*, the Spine from *Steam Powered Giraffe* and Judy Hopps from *Zootropolis*. Each of them will have some really tricky parts to do but I look forward to the challenge.

MARTIN UNSWORTH

Find out more about Mitch by searching for The Signless One Cosplay on Facebook.





NEWS AND PREVIEWS  
IN GAMING  
BY LEE PRICE

# PIXEL JUICE



## NO MAN'S SKY Under Investigation

Things just don't seem to be getting any better for **No Man's Sky**. Despite the game being a technically outstanding slice of gaming, a lot of people still can't quite get over the fact that it's pretty boring, everything starts to look a little samey after a while, and there isn't really all that much to do.

That may sound like harsh criticism, but it is something that is being taken to heart by the UK's Advertising Standards Authority, which is investigating the game under claims that it may have misrepresented itself to consumers after receiving several complaints about it.

The quality of graphics, references to a lack of loading times and the idea that factions fight over territory are all apparently being investigated.

It must be heart-breaking for Hello Games to be dealing with the intense criticism the game has received since it was launched. Clearly a hell of a lot of effort has gone into the title, but it suffers from the old Peter Molyneux curse of not delivering what it promised. Frankly, we'll be surprised if the company manages to make it through the debacle unscathed and willing to try something different again.

## COMING SOON



## DEAD RISING 4

PLATFORM: PC, XBOX ONE

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 6TH

*Everybody's favourite zombie smash-'em-up is back and we are sure to have plenty of new ways to unleash wanton carnage on the poor buggers. The game will bring back fan-favourite Frank West and is set in a Christmas-themed shopping mall, so if we don't get to dress up as Santa to cave zombie skulls in, we will be very upset. The biggest change is that the game will no longer feature the timer system that has been a major part of the previous three, which should change the dynamic a little in addition to offering more freedom.*

## COMING SOON



## SUPER MARIO MAKER

PLATFORM: 3DS

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2ND

*Super Mario Maker served as a pretty fitting swansong for the Wii U. Granted, there are still games being made for the console, but nothing quite of the calibre of Nintendo's take on LittleBigPlanet. It's only natural that the game should make its way to the 3DS, so here we are. This should offer pretty much the same experience, with players being able to build their own Mario levels and share them with others around the globe. Only this time, you will be able to see them in slightly awkward 3D!*

## Ubisoft CEO Talks Nintendo NX

It comes to something when we feel like we're learning more about Nintendo's upcoming console from third party developers than we are from the company that's actually making the bloody thing, but that seems to be the situation we are in at the moment.

Ubisoft CEO Yves Guillemot is clearly excited for the console, as he believes it offers players something that provides a completely different experience to current consoles. Whether that's a good or bad thing is left entirely to your own imagination.

As he puts it: "The new Nintendo [console] is a fantastic machine. It's really a new approach, it's really Nintendo, coming with something new again. We love it. I think, once again, the interface is very attractive. It's a machine that will be easy to use for all gamers. They have built in something that will give us chance to really have a different experience from what exists today. That's what I like - that they come with something new that is adapted to what we actually want now."

So it's going to be something new. That's great. Also kinda heard that a lot already. How about Nintendo just hurry up and tell us what they are delivering?





## PS4 Pro Announced

After all of the rumours, it is now official that Sony is releasing a slightly updated version of the PS4. It will feature 4K support for the few people that have a 4K TV, better graphics, a faster processor and a bigger hard drive.

Thankfully, the company announced that a lot of developers are currently updating their games to take advantage of what the Pro has to offer and it appears that people only need to download patches to access those updates, rather than buy the games again. Said patches will also be free, in case you were wondering. Plus, all versions of the PS4 should be able to handle VR, so that's encouraging.

## COMING SOON



## KINGDOM HEARTS HD 2.8 FINAL CHAPTER PROLOGUE

PLATFORM: PS4

RELEASE DATE: JANUARY 24TH

*Can we just get Kingdom Hearts III already, instead of all of these weirdly named remixes that just give us jazzed up versions of games that we already have, please? That may be a tad unfair, as Prologue (we refuse to use the full title) also offers up a couple of unique pieces of content in the form of a couple of new HD games that tell familiar tales in the series from the perspective of other characters. It's probably only one for Kingdom Hearts completionists, or those who haven't played Kingdom Hearts 3D: Dream Drop Distance yet.*

## COMING SOON



## SHIN MEGAMI TENSEI IV: APOCALYPSE

PLATFORM: 3DS

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 31ST

*By now, we all know what we will be getting from the Shin Megami Tensei games: rock-solid RPG action that still has the ability to pull people in and make them play for hours at a time. Apocalypse is set in the same universe as Shin Megami Tensei IV and deals with the aftermath of a devastating war between the angels and the armies of Lucifer. Tokyo is protected by a giant rock dome, but resources in the city are scarce, with the protagonist taking the role of GodSlayer after being killed by a demon. It's probably one you're gonna have to play to really get it.*

## MARIO Is Coming To Mobile

After Nintendo and Niantic experienced so much success with **Pokémon Go**, despite the fact that the game has now lost about three-quarters of its paying players, it should have been expected that the company would start bringing some of its other big hitters over to mobile platforms.

That leads us to **Super Mario Run**, which is going to be exclusive to iOS, at least for the time being. From what we can see of the game, Mario automatically runs right and the player taps the screen to make him jump, with bigger taps meaning bigger jumps. So basically, it removes all of the stuff that makes **Mario** such a joy to play in order to cater for the mobile market that eats up videogames that require as little effort or skill as possible.

That's probably an overly cynical way to view things, as we can't see Nintendo abandoning proper Mario games with the NX just over the horizon. No less than Shigeru Miyamoto himself has implied that the company is focusing on mobile games because that's where most players are these days, with the subtle aim seeming to be to create awareness of the company's properties that may lead mobile players to purchase their traditional consoles and the good versions of the games they play on their phones.

It will be interesting to see how that works out for them.

## POKÉMON Games Are Coming to the NX

While it should hardly be surprising to anybody that we will be getting **Pokémon** games on Nintendo's NX, what's interesting about this little news item is that it seems to confirm a longstanding rumour about the console.

Pokémon Company executive Tsunekazu Ishihara recently spoke about the future of the series, saying: "The NX is trying to change the concept of what it means to be a home console device or a hand-held device. We will make games for the NX."

Later reports suggested that the game in question would be made by Game Freaks, the people who brought **Pokémon** to life. This would also mark the first time that they have developed a **Pokémon** game for a Nintendo console, rather than just the handhelds.

The really interesting thing here though is the claim that Nintendo are trying to change the concept of what it means to be a home console or hand-held device. That seems to lend credence to the rumours that the NX will be both.





## An End to DARK SOULS

The brilliant **Dark Souls 3** really does feel like the end of an era, with the game offering tons of fan service along with rounding up everything that has made the series so beloved by gamers all over the world.

FromSoftware President Hidetaka Miyazaki has all but confirmed this with recent statements about the game's upcoming DLC, stating: "It's time to move away from the **Dark Souls** franchise. As president of FromSoftware, I'm not completely denying the possibility of bringing back the franchise in the future. There could be someone else in my company who wants to work on new instalments. But we believe that the series will end after the two DLC."

If this is the end for the series, then it has been an amazing run. Frankly, we can't wait to see what the company has up its sleeve next. We anticipate a sequel to the excellent **Bloodborne** and, if we're really lucky, the introduction of a brand new IP that sets a new benchmark for what fantasy gaming is supposed to be.

## COMING SOON



## WEREWOLVES WITHIN VR

PLATFORM: PC, PS4

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 6TH

Not much is known about **Werewolves Within**. According to Ubisoft, it's a multiplayer game where players are tasked with sitting around a table and identifying the werewolf amongst the group so that villagers can cast it out. What a grand new world of virtual reality technology we live in when we can have a game that is basically a really expensive version of **Guess Who**, but with werewolves. This is probably going to be terrible and smacks of a company trying to push anything out there to get on the VR bandwagon. Proper games please, Ubisoft.

## COMING SOON



## THE LAST GUARDIAN

PLATFORM: PS4

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 9TH

Okay, this should definitely be coming out this time, right? Originally scheduled for an October release, **The Last Guardian** is a game that many have been waiting for years to play and it is finally just around the corner. Focusing primarily on the relationship between a young boy and a giant creature called **Trico**, the game is sure to feature all of the hallmarks of the team behind **Ico** and **Shadow of the Colossus**. Beautiful animation, a subtle story and extremely creative gameplay are all to be expected. This should be a mesmerising experience.

## DESTINY 2 Is Coming To PC

In news that can only be met with a "Well... duh", sources are claiming that **Destiny 2** will be made available to PC gamers as well as console fans. The company decided against releasing the original on the platform, presumably because they thought an FPS-MMO would do poorly on the PC. Yeah.

Regardless, PC gamers will now be able to see what all of the fuss was about, assuming this turns out to be true. If it doesn't, then surely Bungie is going to be missing a trick here.

## RESIDENT EVIL 7 Will Feature No Microtransactions

It really feels as though Capcom are starting to get a handle on some of the complaints that old codgers like us have about the current state of the gaming industry, particularly when it comes to the dreaded microtransaction. **Street Fighter V** players are able to earn everything that is available to buy in-game if they are willing to put the hours in and now it has been revealed that the upcoming **Resident Evil 7** will feature absolutely no microtransactions at all.

It will have pre-order bonuses, because Capcom aren't going to fix everything at once, but this is still an encouraging announcement that tells us the company is intent on delivering a great gaming experience, rather than one that encourages people to pony up the dough to get the content they have already paid for.



# REVIEWS

THE LATEST  
GAMING RELEASES  
REVIEWED AND RATED



## EMBER

DEVELOPER: N-FUSION INTERACTIVE / PUBLISHER: 505 GAMES / PLATFORM: PC / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

There's a very exact blend of story, action, and risk that makes an excellent action RPG. Screw up anything from the top-down view to the risk factor in facing hordes of enemies, and chances are you're going to ruin your game. Nailing this exactly is what made *Dungeon Siege* such an enduring pillar of the gaming industry, and failing to capture that special blend of violence was what helped truly ruin *Sacred 3*. N-Fusion Interactive seemed to understand this and, thanks to their careful efforts, *Ember* proves to be the stunning success *Diablo III* should have been on launch.

The promotional materials have made one thing clear time and time again: this was a labour of love. This was a decade in the making and built upon the standards set by the likes of Blizzard, and it most definitely succeeds. The story here hits most of the tropes you would expect. The world is in peril, things are quite literally going to hell, and conflict rages across the land. Small bands of heroes combat vast legions of monsters and their titanic brutes, all in the name of personal glory or duty. However, what makes it stand out is how it twists many of these tropes in its favour or finds a new angle to exploit.

Each and every frame captures the visceral joy of wading into combat, frantically hacking your way through an army of foes or racing to keep them back as you pepper them with spells. Flexible enough to support both tactical strikes and relentless attack spamming, the game's core mechanics encourage you to keep pushing forwards, to

keep risking our hard-won advantages in a bid to gain more experience. You're always just powerful enough to put up a fight against the hordes of unholy foes, but you'll often subconsciously push yourself into punching way above your weight. At these points, upon bumping into some nightmare of a mook out to revenge all the buddies you slaughtered, you'll have two outcomes: a quick death, or an uphill desperate struggle you'll win only by the skin of your teeth. It's at these points where the game feels most alive.

What will likely keep you hooked alongside the combat are its exceptional crafting and loot systems. While nothing is truly plentiful and you'll have to spend time hunting for certain items more than once, it never reaches that point of sheer frustration or absolute tedium. As such, you get that all-important sense of accomplishment without the usual risks. Crafting, meanwhile, is more akin to something you would expect from an *Ultima* title than anything else. Covering food, potions, armour and weapons, the sheer level of creativity is astounding, and adds a very welcome degree of preparation to each expedition into enemy territory. While vendors might offer certain necessary items, chances are they'll lack something you need in bulk, or the right combination of potions, requiring you to deal with this shortcoming personally.

The environments themselves, while graphically limited, are fantastic, with a vibrant, broad range of areas from accursed forests to icy caverns. However, this is where a few of the game's real issues start to creep in, as many lack a real sense of

exploration into the unknown. This was partially the fault of the overall mapping, but also the artistic direction, which is generic to say the least. This would be fine if you were always on the move, but there's a surprising amount of downtime between combat. As health and mana does not naturally regenerate, you can be left waiting around for minutes at a time after being worn down by attrition, bringing the experience to a screeching halt.

More than anything else though, the worst failing is easily the user interface. Clunky and limited, many odd choices hinder its overall usefulness and seem to forget a few essential basics. While hotkeys are present, you only have a minute number to choose from. This makes character customisation oddly limited, which is paired up with the fact you can only have three abilities active at a time, each tied into your equipped gear. Nine times out of ten, this causes you to become something of a jack-of-all-trades.

Still, with all that said, is *Ember* worth it? Definitely. Those who loved the likes of *Dungeon Siege*, *Diablo* and *Torchlight* should mark this one down as an essential purchase. It's easily one of the best bargains we've seen in months and one of the most enjoyable action RPGs of the 2010s, so don't miss out on it.

CALLUM SHEPARD



8



DEVELOPER: BEHAVIOUR INTERACTIVE / PUBLISHER: BANDAI NAMCO, BEHAVIOUR DIGITAL / PLATFORM: PC, MAC, LINUX / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

★★★★★ 4







## RECORE

DEVELOPER: COMCEPT, ARMATURE STUDIO / PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT STUDIOS / PLATFORM: PC, XBOX ONE / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Welcome to 2016's wounded beast. This is a truly fantastic game, a triumph in some regards and a true modern day classic. Yet, this potential is hidden away; buried beneath poor decisions, bugs and some surprisingly basic failings, the true genius of ReCore's design is something you have to fight to enjoy.

Set in the distant future, humanity has abandoned Earth. Lost to disease and disaster, humankind instead turned their attention to a new world, Far Eden, hoping for a new beginning. One such colonist, Joule Adams, awakens on this world mysteriously alone and faced not with a verdant paradise

but a sand-blasted wasteland. Something has gone horribly wrong, and their future now lies in her quest for answers.

The game's core mechanics are an odd mix of traditionalist ideas and modern concepts, blending together platformer and third-person shooter aspects. At first glance, the over the shoulder view, pacing, movement and general presentation make it look as if you're in for a Gears of War-style experience. Then however, you get to everything else – rather than sprint-rolls, you have an air dash, double jump and a number of Mega Man inspired moves. Rather than mix of assault rifles, rocket launchers

and the like, you have a single rifle which can be recombined to take down specific foes. Rather than having a single drone which serves as little more than an excuse for escort missions, you have a variety of robotic allies. All of which can be used to gain scrap resources or even traverse levels, and rather than dropping ammo, enemies leave behind other robotic cores to further enhance these companions.

In many regards it's very reminiscent of Metroid Prime – The core inspirations stem from the games of yesteryear, but it's used as a skeleton to build more modern themes upon. An unsurprising turn given many of the same creators were involved. Many of the ideas are very original indeed, but no single one manages to truly nail what they were going for. While the multi-mode gun is certainly entertaining, the colour coded foes become more than a little tedious after a while. It's less "the right tool for the right job" than severely limiting your arsenal in the face of certain enemies. Equally, the idea behind the robots and foes – or cores as the game calls them – is certainly quite inventive, but managing them is an undeniable chore late on in the game thanks to some oddities in the controls.

It also doesn't help that

ReCore is remarkably poorly optimised. With loading times which makes Bloodborne look speedy, dying and respawning is a chore at the best of times. You can be left waiting for minutes at a time for it to start up again, but even accepting that you'll keep bumping into areas which are extremely rough around the edges. Crashes or abrupt freezing are hardly uncommon as you traverse the desert, and more than a few of the later battles turn into something of a chore in massed engagements, where the enemy AI goes from Sam Fisher to Baldrick levels of competence in a matter of seconds.

ReCore is ultimately something worth playing, but much like E.Y.E. Divine Cybermancy or many other experimental shooters you have to stomach a great deal of bad to get to the good. The talent and experience is on display here in the right places, but many ideas are extremely chunkily implemented and lack the fine polish to help them truly stand out. In its current state, a full price purchase is definitely hard to justify, but it's still well worth a look for the breath of fresh air.

CALLUM SHEPARD

★★★★★★★ 6



## BIOSHOCK – THE COLLECTION

DEVELOPER: 2K (VARIOUS), DIGITAL EXTREMES, BLIND SQUIRREL / PUBLISHER: 2K / PLATFORM: PC, PS4, XBOX ONE / RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The title of these games is a falsehood. While they might tote the name 'Remastered', a more honest publisher would have branded them 'Retextured' as that really is just about all that has been done here. What we have here is akin to a very extensive graphical upgrade mod, boosting the basic visuals but doing little to nothing to fix long-standing bugs or improve a number of very basic features. From that opening, you can

guess we're going to be focusing upon the actual upgrades over the games themselves here, and that will be reflected in the final score. BioShock and BioShock 2 are classics, rightfully lauded for their gripping atmosphere and extensive storylines, but that is hard to accept when this upgrade fails to do them justice – especially for PC owners. For example, one of the major complaints against the original BioShock was the mouse

smoothing and acceleration issues, both of which made aiming difficult at the best of times. Neither have been fixed at all, and if anything they have gotten substantially worse, to the point where precision shooting is next to impossible.

Even some of the upgrades have their own hindrances and alarmingly basic issues which hinder your enjoyment. Basic controller support was something widely welcomed, but in doing this the developers seem to have gone a step too far. Once they are plugged in, certain button prompts will only register for controllers rather than a mouse and keyboard, and in BioShock 2's case the menu can only be navigated via thumbstick.

Many basic graphical essentials are also completely absent in this release, with the games lacking any meaningful FOV options to expand the screen. Top that with a frame rate, which barely reaches sixty FPS at the best of times, no graphical options save for basic resolution changes, vsync, and anti-aliasing, and

this 'Remastered' version reeks of being a rushed cash grab. The only real effort in development seems to have gone into nice bonuses such as the commentaries and galleries presenting lost ideas. While certainly welcome, and fascinating in terms of conceptual evolution, they just don't make up for such a poor upgrade; and hardly make up for the fact Infinite has seen no changes whatsoever.

Many of the technological xenophobes unironically calling themselves the PC Master Race have blamed console owners for this failing, but in truth even on consoles this wouldn't be worth it. There are so many glaring flaws that, short of a major overhaul, you would honestly do better just to grab the originals once they're on sale. It's still BioShock, and as such a fantastic trilogy, but for all the promises made this Collection simply fails to fix any old errors.

CALLUM SHEPARD

★★★★★★★ 4





The Board is a T-Shirt!

## BATTLE OF THE BANDS

DESIGNER: SAM BALLARD, ED SAPERIA / ARTIST: SAM BALLARD / PUBLISHER: ORIGINAL CONTENT LONDON / RELEASE DATE: PRE-ORDER ON KICKSTARTER NOW

Most of us, at some point, have harboured a fantasy of being some sort of rock star. Who doesn't want to be some sort of music god, beloved by millions and able to woo the object of their affections with the single strum of an appropriate instrument?

Of course, the reality is somewhat different. Real music is hard work, and requires dedication and working with other people to succeed. Those of us who have ever been in a band will recognise how tough it can be. Original Content London's debut game, Battle of The Bands, tries to capture all the silly fun of being in a band without any of that tedious practicing and learning skills nonsense.

It's essentially a card and worker placement game that simulates a new band going out trying to make it. Each of you has a hand of cards. These are broken down into hype, chops, riffs, gear, fans and passion. You need at least the first four of these things to make a go of it as a band; you can't play a gig without gear, and if you don't have the chops to use a trombone with those fusion-funk riffs, then how are you going to hype your show and attract fans?

Typically, you don't have enough cards in your hand to go it alone, so you have to ask your fellow players to contribute cards to your gig. This isn't a co-operative game though, so it's more a case of who can negotiate the best deal for themselves. For example, you may have all the cards you need to bring sax-based heavy metal to the world, but you need a van to put it all in. Pull off successful gig and those involved get to draw more cards. Some of those cards

are 'fan cards'. Get twenty-seven points worth of fans and you've made it. Though you may lose fans on the way as you create bigger and more spectacular gigs.

Of course, reaching twenty seven has another implication in rock music terms. It's the age many famous stars die at. The other type of card is passion. These are 'wild cards'. Don't have an amp for the electric guitar? Don't worry, somehow your passion will see you through. As you get more popular, it's tough to hold onto your passion; you can only hold onto one thing per gig, the rest of the cards are spent.

The result is a fairly fast, fun game that takes about 30 minutes, longer if you decide to really go for it and pull a rock

star-style strop. The components also help with the atmosphere; player tokens are button badges and the board itself is a black T-shirt with the game board printed on it. The T-shirt will fit most people, though if you wear the thing it may make playing the game a bit tricky. The art on the cards is pixel-style and this fits with the pop culture vibe.

Battle of the Bands is a great game and one to look out for. It's ideal for the rock star in us all.

ED FORTUNE

★★★★★★★★★★★★★ 9



PHOTO: MIKEY SMITH



# RETRO BYTES

A LOOK BACK AT  
THE WORLD OF  
RETRO GAMING  
BY CHRIS JACKSON



## HERMAN FUNSTER

Ahh, it's that most wonderful time of year again - the dark nights are closing in, living rooms across the land are filled with that comforting warm dusty smell that you get when you switch the radiator on for the first time in months, and we're all looking forward to that one night of the year when we get to turn all the lights off, close the curtains, and pretend nobody's home so that we don't have to give sweets to the horrible snot-nosed kids from next door as a reward for their half-arsed efforts at costume making. That's right - Halloween is here again! Grab a torch, slip into your PJs, dive under the covers, and prepare to have the willies put right up you as we seek out a few of the more obscure and absurd horror/horrifying games from years gone by...

### SWEET HOME (NES, 1989)

Based on a Japanese horror film of the same name and released exclusively in the Land of the Rising Sun on the Family Computer (as the NES was known in its homeland), there's way more to *Sweet Home* than meets the eye. Not only is it an uncommonly tense and nerve-racking game for the family-friendly system it was created on, but it's also one of the most important games that have ever been made.

In the *Sweet Home* movie, a small film crew enters an abandoned mansion in the hope of finding a set of precious paintings that had been left there by a previous occupant. Each member of the crew has their own 'thing' - there's the main dude, the producer, a kid who's tagging along just for the sake of it, a photographer, and an art restorer. Of course, being a horror film,

it turns out that the mansion is haunted by the vengeful ghost of the artist's wife - their infant son was burned alive in the house's incinerator, and she now roams the halls intent on killing trespassers.

With Capcom developing the game at the same time as the movie was being made - and indeed with the whole process being supervised by the film's director, Kiyoshi Kurosawa - the *Sweet Home* game follows the plot of the film almost to the letter. Playing out as a top-down dungeon-crawling RPG, players guide the documentary crew around the mansion, hacking monsters apart in turn-based battles, filling in gaps in the story with hidden notes and messages, and solving puzzles until, hopefully, they manage to escape. Just like in the film, each member of the five-person crew has their own ability which will come in extremely

handy during the course of the game. It is possible to control three members of the five-person team at any one time, swapping between lead characters at any point, while hoping that your two other crew mates are keeping out of trouble until the time when you switch characters and help them catch up. Each character is able to carry a limited amount of items, which, in itself, leads to some frantic moments as you try to remember where you left the person with the item you need to progress further into the mansion.

The sheer amount of horrific imagery that is used in the game was a real eye-opener at the time. The family computer is known as one of the most family-friendly consoles of all time, and seeing bodies smashed face-first into walls before sliding to the ground leaving a trail of bloody bricks in their wake just feels incredibly jarring. Nintendo was so upset by the content of the game that they chose not to localise it for other regions, meaning that *Sweet Home* never saw the light of day outside of Japan until the Internet got hold of it and created a translated version.

You might have noticed a few similarities between our description of *Sweet Home* and another massively popular, more modern horror franchise. People trapped in a spooky mansion filled with zombies, collecting notes and diary entries in order to find out what's actually going on, managing an awkward inventory, all manner of brutal imagery... sound familiar? That's right; *Sweet Home* was created by Tokuro Fujiwara - one of the men who would later go on to create *Resident Evil*, using this very game as a prototype version. As well as the aforementioned similarities, *Resi* fans will be able to spot many other familiar gameplay elements - the use of paintings to tell a story, multiple endings depending on how well you play, revisiting parts of the mansion to investigate areas that only become accessible later in the game, character-specific items, the list goes on and on. Even *Resi*'s iconic 'door opening' loading screens were first seen in *Sweet Home*.

Is it possible that without *Sweet Home* there might have never been a *Resident Evil*, which in turn is surely one of the greatest games to play at this time of year (we're talking Halloween games, remember)? If you feel like checking out a real unsung hero of gaming history, we highly recommend spending a few hours with *Sweet Home*. Fingers crossed you get out alive!



## HAUNTING STARRING POLTERGUY (MD, 1993)

Something a bit more light-hearted now, as we turn our attentions to a *You've Been Framed*-style accident involving one of the Sardini Corporation's faulty skateboards. Our hero in this game, known only as Polterguy, is a wisecracking leather jacket-wearing Day-Glo green teenage punk with massive hair, on a mission to avenge his death by haunting the Sardini family's home and scaring the living daylights out of them in a huge variety of amusing and terrifying ways.

One of the few actual comedy/horror games on the earlier consoles, *Polterguy* is incredibly easy to play but offers a massive amount of enjoyment. Being invisible to everyone apart from the family dog (who can be distracted using magic), you have free reign over pretty much every object in every room in the house. Household items can be possessed by the press of a button, 'loading' them with scares that will frighten anyone in the room. Walls rotate to reveal a gimp costume nailed to the brickwork; fish tanks fill with blood; an abominable snowman lurches forward out of the freezer... Dad's hair stands on end as his trousers fall down, mum's wig flies into the air as her knickers drop to her ankles, kids wet themselves; heads explode in a shower of fireworks; it's absolute chaos! Raise a family member's scare meter to the max and they will run out of the house, get rid of the whole family to make them collectively move home, then follow them and do it all over again!

Possessing items uses up Polterguy's supply of essential ectoplasm, but this can be replenished by collecting green blobs left behind by terrified family members.



We thought it was something else at first, but whatever. It's definitely ectoplasm. Not wee wee. Running out of ectoplasm sees Polterguy being sent to the Underworld, where he fights his way through a dungeonesque environment collecting enough 'plasm to be sent back to the Overworld – there are also occasional magic spells to collect down here, which help with creating the screams and scares in the land of the living.

There are apparently almost 400 items to possess throughout the entire game, so it's going to keep you going for a while if you want to see everything on offer. We've seen this hanging around

for pretty low prices recently, and highly recommend this Halloween season as the perfect time to pick it up and give yourself some ideas for fancy dress outfits. Spiked hair, covered in tinkle, trousers round ankles. Sorted.

## HELLNIGHT (PS1, 1998)

Underground Tokyo. A huge twisting mass of sewers and subway tunnels known as the Mesh, filled with cult members. A mutant zombie-like creature, escaped from a shady research lab, stalks the darkness. A train accident with two survivors – you and a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl. No weapons, no combat, just RUN!

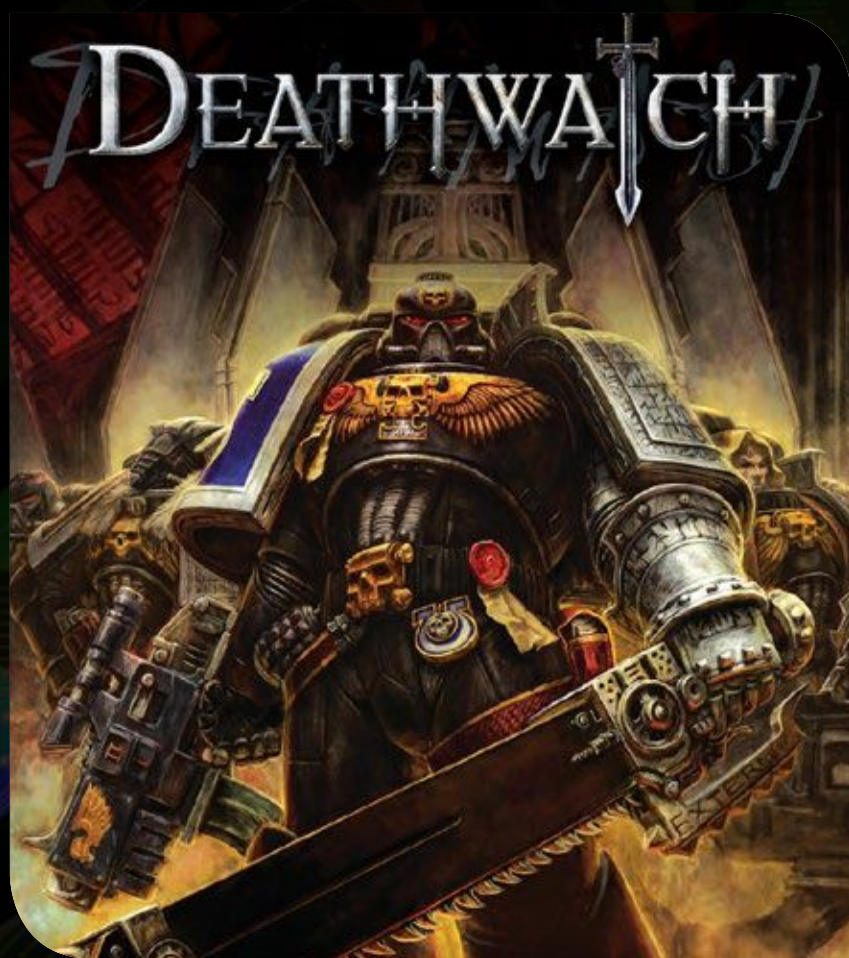
*Hellnight* was released in Japan and Europe in 1998 but has remained off the radar ever since as the UK wasn't included in the European release and the game never made it to the USA. A tense and terrifying first-person adventure through some dank and unhospitable tunnels filled with crazy cultists, a group of citizens who now make the underground their home, and 'that' monster, *Hellnight* is unique in that it features no combat and instead places emphasis on storytelling and atmosphere to drive the player through the game. Sound cues indicate the presence of the monster, leading to frantic chase sequences through the cold and bleak sewers, and deaths of your companions really do hit home in an environment as isolated as this. You can always find someone else to hang around with, but it's never the same. Taking note of clues, solving puzzles, running errands for weirdos, finding your way around the Mesh and finally reaching the surface and freedom, *Hellnight* is one of those adventures that will stick with you long after putting the controller down. Fans of things that go bump in the night should absolutely adore this one!





# ROLL FOR DAMAGE

ED FORTUNE  
GUIDES YOU  
THROUGH THE  
REALM OF  
TABLETOP  
GAMING



In case you missed the news, Games Workshop and Fantasy Flight Games have announced that they will no longer be working together. Or to put it another way, table-top gaming manufacturer Games Workshop has not extended the license to a rival table-top gaming manufacturer.

On paper, it was always a bit of an odd partnership. After all, both companies compete for a very similar audience, so you'd be forgiven for wondering how it came about in the first place. It's important to realise that the two companies are very different in approach, and back in the late 2000s when the two firms joined forces, the match made perfect sense.

Games Workshop has a very long back catalogue of old games and failed projects. Their biggest selling product has always been anything connected

to their space opera *Warhammer 40,000*, but there was a lot of love for its original fantasy setting as well. Games Workshop had stopped being about individual games in the late '90s. Classics such as *Necromunda*, *Blood Bowl* and *Adeptus Titanicus* had been effectively discontinued, despite a solid fan base. There simply wasn't room on the shelves of Games Workshop's retail outlets for these things, and it was easier (and more profitable) to push the core *Warhammer*-themed games and nothing more.

One anomaly was the *Warhammer Fantasy Roleplaying* game. Long since ignored by Games Workshop, superstar game designer James Wallis had brought it back from the brink in the late '90s by picking up the licence and running with it. It was a fan hit, but not hugely profitable for those involved and

Wallis and chums moved on. Still, it proved that there was a market for these games beyond nostalgia.

Fantasy Flight Games, on the other hand, pretty much specialise in grabbing games that people love and then tinkering with the bits that people like the most about them until they become even better. FFG had the reputation for good games, but not much in the way of eye-catching brands. It was a strong match at the time, and it produced an absolute load of great games.

The most striking of these was FFG's range of 40K roleplaying games. You see, *Warhammer 40,000* never really had its own RPG. It was always a war game, though the first edition had heavy RPG elements to it. Other 40K spin-off games produced by Games Workshop (such as *Necromunda* and *Inquisitor*) toyed with roleplaying, but were still mostly miniatures-based combat games. This changed with *Dark Heresy*. In it, you played a mere mortal who had been hired by the Inquisition (a galactic secret police for all humanity) to deal with threats to mankind. Given these threats include demons, dark gods, aliens and traitors, the characters were pretty much screwed. That's what made it fun!

It drew heavily on the (very popular) 40K novels, mostly the ones written by Dan Abnett, Aaron Dembski-Bowden and Graham McNeil. It inspired four other RPGs. *Only War* let you play an Imperial Guardsman, *Rogue Trader* let you play a human space pirate and *Deathwatch* finally let people be Space Marines. There was also *Black Crusade*, which let you play Chaos Cultists and Chaos Marines, because bad guys are fun, sometimes. The range breathed new life into the long ignored *Sisters of Battle* and that's not the only thing FFG brought back.

FFG produced original board games based on the license as well. *Chaos in the Old World* let you be a Chaos God and won awards for its strategy elements. It's essentially a game about spreading horror across the world, exploiting multiple strategies and changing tactics as you move across the board. *Forbidden Stars* turned the world of 40K into an epic game of galactic civilisations, again to great effect.

The long out-of-print *Fury of Dracula* (which we raved about in this column earlier this year) was brought back from the dead with typical flair. Better components and finer mechanics elevated a good game into something



that deserved to be in a hall of fame. Both *Space Hulk* and *Blood Bowl* got turned into card games. This may seem a bit odd, but both card games contained all the fun of the original without taking up as much room. And it also allowed Games Workshop to re-launch *Space Hulk* without it conflicting with *Fantasy Flight* in any way.

New life also got breathed into *Chaos Marauders*, a very silly card game about an orc horde.

Another game that returned was *Talisman*, and a 40K version, called *Relic*, was also added to the mix. *Talisman* has always been a bit of a marmite game; some love it, some hate, but it's very, very popular, especially amongst the nostalgic.

All of these games will now go out of print. As yet there's been no announcement as to what Games Workshop intends to do next, but we can take an educated guess. For start, GW changed their approach to video game licensing recently. A few years ago, they were very, very picky about their choices for third-party video game makers. Now they've been much more generous, licensing all sort of old games to many, many app developers. The result has been a rush of *Warhammer*-style games for your iPhone. One of the most popular? *Talisman*. In fairness, though, *Talisman* works better on a tablet than it does on the board!

Games Workshop has also embraced the fresh and global popularity of board games. It's no longer the '90s, and they've changed strategy. They've been churning out new games recently, and rather wonderfully, they're pretty damned good.

For example, they recently launched *Warhammer Quest: The Silver Tower*, a reworking of the dungeon crawl adventure game *Warhammer Quest*. They've placed it in their new fantasy



world, known as *Age of Sigmar*. This has annoyed people who don't like new things, but really it doesn't alter the feel of the game that much. It's set in *The Silver Tower*, a mystic place dedicated to Tzeentch, Chaos God of Change. It's a scenario-based miniatures game that uses a modular board, special counters and specific characters. Similar to that other GW classic, *Heroquest*.

Of course, *Heroquest* has been copied many times, most recently by CMON with *Zombicide Black Plague* and Mantic with their game *Dungeon Saga*. *Warhammer Quest: The Silver Tower* really does feel like GW cracking their knuckles and taking their competitors back to school. The game is brilliantly smooth and the models and components are just gorgeous.

They haven't stopped there, though. I lamented a while ago that we may never see Jake Thornton's classic *Predator*-inspired horror game, *Lost Patrol*. Games Workshop recently re-released it, with

better components and stronger rules. New games, such as *Assassinorum: Execution Force* and *Deathwatch Overkill*, combine brilliant models with fun, playable rules. There's even a boxed set that lets you build two 40K-style giant robots and lets you pitch them against each other. All these new games, of course, mean that Games Workshop have new properties to license out to developers and the like. Intriguingly, the forthcoming *Gorechosen* looks to be a gladiatorial game. It'll have a tough job matching the likes of *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*, but it'll be fun to see if it comes close.

GW's new tactic seems to be 'get them playing games'. More and more starter sets seem to come with dice and some sort of rules. It's an interesting approach, and a good one.

Of special interest is the *Warhammer 40,000* roleplaying games. The problem with RPGs (from a commercial angle) is that once you've got the main rules, all you need is your imagination. Gamers rarely stop playing something simply because the books are out of print, especially in the digital age where it is easy to find old books. Will Games Workshop go back into the roleplaying game writing business? Or could a plucky third party pick up the range and do something new and fresh with it? Time will tell.

It's also worth noting that *Fantasy Flight* have been no slouch with their own range of products. *Star Wars X-Wing* has been outselling *Warhammer 40,000* in key places and it's currently the most popular miniature battles game amongst the geek set. With FFG embracing the power of their fully operational *Star Wars* license and Games Workshop going all out to produce fresh new games, it's a great time to be a gamer. +



Ed Fortune can be reached at [@ed\\_fortune](https://twitter.com/ed_fortune) and contacted via [ed.fortune@starburstmagazine.com](mailto:ed.fortune@starburstmagazine.com). He's always interested to know what games you're playing. Unless it's *Monopoly*.



# WATTO'S EMPORIUM

STUFF WE LIKED FROM  
AROUND THE WEB  
THIS MONTH WITH  
JACK BOTTOMLEY

## Fantastic Shirts and Where To Buy Them

We are sure that by now you have more knowledge than a mere muggle about the wizarding world, conjured up from the fantastic mind of author J. K. Rowling. Whether from the pages of her books or the films that have made up the immensely popular *Harry Potter* franchise. However, if you are yet to travel to this world, then you can do so (without standing in your fireplace) this November, with David Yates' adaptation of Rowling's Potter prequel/spin-off *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

This issue has already given you a lesson on what dark arts you can expect from the film itself (see our feature on pages 42) but as the release date approaches faster than a quidditch snitch, we were excited to see some official merchandise already ready for pre-order from [merchoid.com](http://merchoid.com). First we have this nostalgic and nicely designed "Witch's Best Friend" shirt, showcasing all the things an American witch needs – a wand and impeccable style and class. For the guys though (and just as many badass ladies for that matter), there is the "Wanded Extremely Dangerous" shirt, which is far darker and a good suggestion of the direction that the film might take. Those trailers certainly could be described as wanded or dangerous, that's for sure.

**WANDED EXTREMELY  
DANGEROUS SHIRT - £15.99**  
(PRE-ORDER: DUE TO SHIP  
20TH OCTOBER)

**WITCH'S BEST FRIEND  
SHIRT - £15.99**  
(PRE-ORDER: DUE TO SHIP  
20TH OCTOBER)

**BOTH AVAILABLE FROM  
MERCHOID.COM**





## Universally Loved

As we have already made quite evident this issue, the Universal Monster movies have had an undying cinematic legacy and with the universe being rebooted we await their future exploits. So with that in mind, we had a look for some Universal Monster-themed gear this Halloween season, indulging this brilliant CaptainSunshine designed Abbey Road Beatles-inspired shirt from [redbubble.com](http://redbubble.com), which replaces the iconic musical group with the equally iconic Frankenstein's Monster, Creature from the Black Lagoon, Count Dracula and the Wolfman. That lot crossing the road is sure to stop oncoming traffic! Alternatively, for an even larger dosage of awesomeness, the site has a simply beautiful shirt designed by Chema Bola8, which sees the *Masters of the Universe* become "The Monsters of the Universal"! The Phantom of the Opera as Skeletor, the Bride of Frankenstein as Evil-Lyn, the Wolf Man as Beast Man and the Lagoon Creature as Mer-Man - boy we would pay good money to see this. And the Frankenstein Castle Grayskull background is a very nice touch.



**MONSTERS OF ABBEY ROAD SHIRT - £17.52**

**MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSAL SHIRT - £17.90**

**BOTH AVAILABLE FROM REDBUBBLE.COM**



## The Night He Comes To Your Home

As Halloween approaches, spare a thought for Jamie Lee Curtis, who has had a few traumatic Halloweens thanks to a certain someone. Well in-between issues, John Carpenter made news headlines by speaking openly about his thoughts on Rob Zombie's so-so 2007 remake (he should have given his thoughts on its atrocious 2009 sequel) of his landmark '70s seasonal slasher. The original *Halloween* will forever be the best and to remind you of this, why not go that extra mile and bring "the shape" to your home this year, with this life size cutout of ol' Michael Myers from [starstills.com](http://starstills.com). Just don't forget he's there!

**MICHAEL MYERS  
HALLOWEEN CLASSIC  
POSE LIFESIZE CARDBOARD  
CUTOUT / STANDEE /  
STANDUP - £33.99**

**AVAILABLE FROM  
STARSTILLS.COM**



## Don't Weep

On pages 28, we pitted the monsters of *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who* against each other and once again we go back to *Who*, with this nifty item. So, if all this monster talk has you a little bit freaked out, why not suppress your fears with this neat stress toy from [greatbritishcollectables.com](http://greatbritishcollectables.com). Modelled on the predatory Weeping Angels, introduced back in the acclaimed 2007 episode "Blink" of the David Tennant era, this stress toy is twistable, squeezable and grabbable but like the sinister monsters themselves, will always maintain its stance and imposing figure.

**WEEPING ANGEL STRESS TOY - £14.95  
AVAILABLE FROM GREATBRITISHCOLLECTABLES.COM**





WORDS & PHOTOS: ANDREW MARSHALL

**MCM GLASGOW COMIC CON**  
**Glasgow SECC**  
**Exhibition Way**  
**Glasgow**  
**24-25th September 2016**

The MCM Comic Con returned to Scotland for another year, taking over three halls of Glasgow's SECC. Despite the city's notorious weather playing up all weekend, this did nothing to diminish the crowds, plenty of youngsters in skimpy cosplay outfits unafraid of braving the elements to make their way down the Clyde.

The main area was a lively affair, packed all day but rarely overcrowded and with a large contingency of the usual assortment of cosplayers, wide-eyed children, faintly bemused parents and girls carrying 'Free Hugs' signs. Doubtless spurred by the release of *Suicide Squad*, there were more Harley Quinns floating about the place than ever, including more than a few guys dressed as her, as well as the regular collections of popular superheroes and the colourful vibrancy of anime characters.

Despite the convention's name, the only real concession to sequential artwork was the Comic Village, a central collection of alleyways formed by dozens of stalls. It was quite satisfying to see a number of indie creatives, who this time last year had barely a couple of issues of a single title to their name, now having their work sprawl into several series, trade paperbacks, and anthologies.

A crucial problem was the lack of clarity over where the panels were being held, it being specified on neither the website nor the brochure's map, thus making it problematic for attendees and guests alike to find the place, and the woman in the information booth feeling she should receive a commission for every time she pointed someone in the right direction.

There was a big focus on anime, with several large stalls piled with box sets and three of the convention panels devoted to it: an interview with Reo Kurosu, the producer of *Berserk*, *The Heroic Legend of Arslan*, and *Fullmetal Alchemist*; a preview of anime film festival Scotland Loves Anime, and a look at local distributor All the Anime's forthcoming releases.

Andrew Lee Potts was still doing the rounds to promote his excellent web series *Wireless* and also premiered its upcoming

ninth episode, but was still happy to wax lyrical about *Primeval* despite it being over five years since the show's cancellation. Also on the web series front were local supernatural mystery productions *Caledonia* and *Cops & Monsters*, with the cast and crew of each on hand to discuss the shows, and Hilly and Hannah Hindi, the creators and stars of numerous musical parodies on their YouTube channel *The Hillywood Show*.

A particular highlight was Sylvester McCoy, the Seventh Doctor and *The Hobbit's* eccentric wizard Radagast the Brown, who rather than hold the usual interview with a few audience queries, instead grabbed the microphone off the emcee and proceeded to host his own Q&A session, energetically running around the room to field questions with a lively vigour you wouldn't expect of a man well into his seventies.

Other attractions included a *Street Fighter V* tournament; Insane Championship Wrestling holding several exhibition bouts; a *Game of Thrones* Experience where people could have a picture of themselves sitting atop the Iron Throne, while music from the show played on a constant loop and made the work of the nearby stallholders feel far more overtly dramatic; and a working demo of *Geek Retreat VR*, a virtual reality world designed as a social hub with genre specific areas for people to gather together and explore, and with the intent to add immersive entertainment content.

Finishing things off each day was a Cosplay Masquerade, where as well as a wide variance in costumes from comics, films, TV, and games there were also several singing efforts and a few dance performances complementing the nerdy catwalk strutting.

All in all, it was another success for MCM with Glasgow having a wide variety of guests, attractions and activities to please pretty much everyone, no matter their niche.

Keep up to date with future shows at [mcmcomiccon.com](http://mcmcomiccon.com).







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# PAUL MOUNT'S



**Return to work special! This month, we join in the adulation for Netflix superseries *STRANGER THINGS*, take a trip down under to *WOLF CREEK*, marvel at the wonders of *WESTWORLD* and take a tiny look at a resurrected '60s mini-classic...**

Seriously, I turn my back for no more than five minutes [*three months, actually... three months!* – Ed] and all sorts of chaos and debauchery are visited upon this time-honoured temple of televisual appreciation. Suddenly and terribly, **TV Zone** is filled with unseemly references to the various orifices of some of our most beloved pneumatic supermodels of easy virtue. I'm looking at you, Sir Andrew of Pollard (and by the way – those curious carpet stains in the Zone's west wing, what are they all about? I can't shift the buggers; what the hell have you been up to?). It seems I've returned not a moment too soon. Fortunately, my time away has been well spent as I have been able to put the finishing touches to my upcoming biography of *Doctor Who*'s current showrunner; I have toiled long and hard on *The Wit and Wisdom of Steven Moffat* and the resulting three-page pamphlet will be available shortly. Yes, I've still got it... [*Yes, but keep it to yourself* – Ed]

Ah, there's no place like home/**TV Zone**. Although I've been gone for no more than the blink of a TV eye (whatever that is), everything I thought I knew about genre television in 2016 has recently been turned inside out and, appropriately, upside down. I scampered away into the summer with my pocket money clutched tightly in my hot little hand safe in the knowledge that I'd already seen the best the year was going to offer on my telly box; there ain't gonna be anything to touch the Stephen King 'event' series **11-22-63**, so job done, thank you and good night and best of luck with the also-rans, Sir Andrew. Then along comes flippin' Netflix with their out-of-nowhere eight-part series **Stranger Things** and it looked as if I was going have to tear up the rule book (there is a rule book, *fact!*) and dig out some new superlatives to run alongside

my hyperactive hyperbole and characteristic clichés. And sure enough, for a good five or six episodes, **Stranger Things** was leaping ahead of the opposition and looked set to plant its flag deep into the heart of the 'best show of the year' **TV Zone** title so coveted by producers and directors the world over (not *this world*, obviously). Or maybe *not*...

I'm actually not going to dwell on **Stranger Things** for too long this month. This tremendous series, arriving unheralded and reminding us that there can be more to summer TV than wall-to-wall sport, has been the big watercooler show of the year but I'm conscious that it's been available since June and, in current **TV Zone** terms, that's virtually *aeons* ago. Everyone's said their bit about **Stranger Things** by now, even trendy bandwagon-jumpers who wouldn't

watch *our type of telly* unless their lives depended on it, and there's really not much I can usefully add to the tidal wave of acclaim the show's rightfully received virtually across the board. It was a terrific piece of television and what made it so special was the fact that hardly anyone really saw it coming; it just arrived, fully-formed, in one big lump and it's been fascinating to watch people discovering it, exploring it, revelling in it and recognising its influences and appreciating all its references and homages. It's probably been the first real breakthrough crossover hit of the streaming/binge-watching era and it deserves all the kudos that has come its way. **Stranger Things** barely put a foot wrong; from its outstanding performances (especially from its cast of potentially irritating kids – Millie Bobby Brown was a revelation as the eerie, androgynous El, but, in truth, she was matched beat-for-beat by the show's other nippers, especially Finn Wolfhard as Mike and Gaten Matarazzo as Dustin), its inventive and genuinely creepy plot and its wonderfully evocative throwback visuals. It was also surprisingly graphic in places and as a consequence it occasionally lost focus on the '80s vibe it was working so hard to recreate. However, the plot started to creak a little in the last couple of episodes and the denouement was frustratingly unsatisfying, presumably because of the need to set up a second season that, in all honesty, I could probably do without. But I hate to be a party pooper and I'm happy to flag-wave the show and suggest that if you've resisted its charms so far, you need to get stuck in *right away*. It's a close run thing, but **11-22-63** still has the edge as far as I'm concerned.

## WOLF CREEK

Mad monstrous Mick Taylor, Australia's most remorseless serial killer, has been reborn as a TV star with the **Wolf Creek** film franchise (count me in the brief list of those who actually liked the 2013 sequel to the 2005 original) mutating into a six-part series recently screened on Fox in the UK. And an odd beast it was too. John



STRANGER THINGS



Jarrett is back as the ruthless, repellent Mick, merrily slaughtering innocent tourists who wander across his path in Australia's bleak but beautiful outback. This time, however, he makes a silly mistake when, after brutally murdering an innocent vacationing American family, he fails to finish off the family's daughter Eve (Lucy Fry). Dithering Aussie cops don't seem up to the job of tracking down Mick, so Lucy sets off on her own to find him and avenge the deaths not just of her own family but all those countless others who've met their grisly ends in the middle of nowhere courtesy of the drooling, sneering Mick. *Wolf Creek* was an odd and sometimes uncomfortable series, mainly because it never seemed entirely sure what it wanted to be. After a clumsy and clunky first episode, which looked worryingly as if the show was going to be a mundane police procedural, it found its own pace and its own style, but still rarely felt comfortable in its own skin. Much of the story was powered by extreme coincidence and unlikely incident and, alarmingly, it still managed to sag in the middle, which can't be good for a show with only six episodes to tell its story. But in the end, it was quite fun to



WOLF CREEK

see Mick on the backfoot and, thanks to a strong lead performance from Fry, it managed to manoeuvre its way through its plot contrivances to deliver a few shocks, surprises and, inevitably, an ending that teases another run. But

seriously, there's little more that can be done with Mick Taylor now without drifting into repetition. The series has restored his reputation as one of fiction's more ghastly recent psychopathic killers after the poorly received *Wolf Creek 2*, but

## VIEWING NOTES



You gotta admire the BBC for persevering with 'our' kind of TV in the face of overwhelming evidence to suggest that the Great British public really aren't much interested. The most recent UK genre show to arrive stillborn was *The Living and the Dead*, a handsomely mounted but rather unadventurous historical six-parter in which a modernist Victorian psychologist (Colin Morgan) and his wife (Charlotte Spencer) take up residence at his family's ancestral West Country home at harvest time to find spooky goings-on in the form of possessions, eerie spirits and peculiar manifestations of something and/or someone clearly out of time. A beautiful and intriguing six episodes, for sure, but there was really nothing especially chilling in its pedestrian tales of troubled and wronged spirits and assorted seen-all-

this-before spooky-dos. I can imagine only an audience who have never set foot near a horror film or even an episode of *Rentaghost* would have found *The Living and the Dead* even remotely disturbing but the show was not especially well served by being dumped in the middle of what seemed like an endless summer of sport and left to fend for itself after being delivered prior to transmission on the BBC's iPlayer.

I'm not sure what to make of the latest incarnation of Ben Edlund's *The Tick*, which recently arrived as part of Amazon's 'pilot' season. I dimly recall the old animated series and even the short-lived previous live action series and I seem to remember they were considerably more subversive than this rather patchy, one-note pilot starring the magnificent Peter Serafinowicz. Since *The Tick* last failed to tick TV's boxes (god, I'm good) the superhero landscape has changed and this pilot seemed less concerned with undermining the genre than embracing it. Now the Tick is a bona fide, if slightly silly, superhero in an absurd blue suit, he does real superheroey things. The thrust of the narrative concerned his chum Arthur Everest (Griffin Newman) and what laughs were to be had came from Serafinowicz's deadpan delivery and the contrast between the dweeby Arthur and the muscular Tick. But the pilot was interesting enough to leave me wanting more (a series has recently been greenlit so the pilot's done its job) and, of course, you can never have too much Peter Serafinowicz, so the show gets a tentative thumbs-up from me.

It's not big and it's certainly not very clever, but Sky 1's new adventure romp *Hooten and the Lady* starring Michael

Landes is a daft Friday night guilty pleasure. Cut from the same - or slightly cheaper - cloth than the *Indiana Jones* movies and the likes of *Romancing the Stone*, this globe-trotting nonsense features two mismatched will-they/won't-they adventurers/archaeologists hunting for lost treasures and fighting off black-hatted bad guys. It's a lot better than it sounds and a lot more fun... and it's certainly a step up from *Bonekickers*, the last time fictional archaeologists got their own TV show, so shut up and give it a go.

**Wayward Pines** Series Two, eh? Meh...

So there we are. Back in the saddle after a short sabbatical [*Three months!! - Ed*] and I can't help feeling it's all gone rather well. As the nights start to draw in and we all clamber into our winter knickers and heavy topcoats (although I'm writing in the middle of a September heatwave that has racked up UK temperatures hotter than the core of the Sun - although I might have misread that), let's look forward to a heady few months of all-new genre telly, returning favourites and new kids on the block looking for their moments of glory (or at least a second season recommission). Superhero shows, horror shows, time travel shows (lots of 'em coming Stateside - perhaps they've come and gone already?) and even a handful of British shows - new *Red Dwarf* (currently airing - more on that next month), fantasy comedy *Zapped!*, second series of C4's *Humans*, *Doctor Who* spin-off *Class* on BBC3 Online, psychological/supernatural thriller *Him* on ITV. I rather think we're spoilt for choice. Certainly enough new stuff on the way to even fill a famous reality star's chasm of a [*Welcome back - Ed*].



surely it's time now to let him drift into Aussie mythology before he and his killing sprees descend into parody.

## WESTWORLD

By now I daresay you're all utterly hooked on HBO's **Westworld**, currently airing on Sky Atlantic in the UK. I've been fortunate enough to see the first four episodes in advance of transmission and I'm now chomping at the bit (not sure which bit) to see the back six of this gripping, immersive and wonderfully intelligent series. Based, of course, on Michael Crichton's powerful 1973 robot rampage movie, **Westworld** tells the same story but with much more style and panache. In the (presumably) near future, artificial android 'hosts' populate a theme park called Westworld, in which pampered visitors pay huge amounts of money to relive their childhood cowboy fantasies. But it appears that all is not as it seems and the intelligence of the 'hosts' isn't quite as artificial as the park's supervisors and controllers seem to think. The park's often swaggering visitors explore carefully scripted scenarios that the 'hosts' relive again and again - but some of the 'hosts' are starting to experience strange memory flashes as they begin to



realise exactly what they are.

Likely another contender for best show of the year (I can't stand the confusion in my mind!) if it carries on as it's started, **Westworld** is proper, mature, sophisticated science fiction storytelling asking those awkward questions about humanity, inhumanity, technology and what happens when the line between them starts to blur. It's a measured, unhurried series - it has its own sense of creeping unease from the very beginning - and it's all the better for its refusal to spoon-feed its audience. Beautifully written - it's almost elegiac in places - its production values are out of this world and the cast, especially Evan Rachel Wood as Dolores Abernathy, a 'host' who begins to understand the truth about her existence, are pitch perfect. But who knew that Anthony Hopkins (playing Dr Robert Ford, the park's creative director), could turn in such a ham-free performance this late in his post-Hannibal Lecter career? The pace may be a little sluggish for some (despite some lively Western shoot-outs) and I found it a bit too gratuitously sweary in places, but this is top drawer stuff and I really can't wait to see the rest of this classy, thought-provoking series. Blimey, we've got it good at the moment...

## LAND OF THE GIANTS

There's very rarely time or space nowadays to mention any classic archive stuff that might elbow its way into the schedules. But this month, I feel I must give an honourable mention to Horror Channel, who are currently airing their latest kitschy acquisition, Irwin Allen's **Land of the Giants**. Originally screened between 1968 and 1970, the series, the most expensive TV show in history at the time (it's about the crew and passengers of a suborbital liner who travel through a wormhole and find themselves in... well, the title sort of gives it away) utterly possessed me when Channel 4 finally dusted it down and gave it a full airing in the early 1990s (you'll remember my fuller review of the series in this very column in issue 137, of course). Although technology has moved on and TV storytelling has become far more sophisticated, the show is still a fun and colourful romp and an entirely acceptable, if not commendable, way of wasting an hour if you just fancy a bit of classic TV cheese. Hooray for Horror!

Email me - go on - at [paul.mount@starburstmagazine.com](mailto:paul.mount@starburstmagazine.com) or do the Twitter thang @PMount

## ALSO SCREENING



### BLACK MIRROR

Channel 4 pay £75 million for a baking show but don't cough up for more of Charlie Brooker's imaginative 'cautionary tale' anthology series. The world doesn't make sense sometimes. **Six new episodes from October 21st on Netflix.**

### CLASS

BBC3 Online débuts the new **Doctor Who** spin-off created by YA author Patrick Ness (snigger) and set at the fictional Coal Hill School where the Doctor's TV travels began 53 years ago. Current Doctor Peter Capaldi guests in the first episode. **From October 22nd on BBC 3 Online.**

### THE WALKING DEAD - SEASON 7

Find out the resolution to that cliff-hanger when Robert Kirkman's zombie drama returns for the first half of its sixteen-episode split season run. **From October 24th on Fox.**



LAND OF THE GIANTS



# it's only a movie

column by JORDAN ROYCE



## What *BLAIR WITCH* Really Needed Was a Genuine Shock Reveal...

As I wrote in last month's column, things were good in the world of STARBURST. I was happy, and things were going well. I should not have allowed myself to relax too much, as little did I realise those were halcyon days, and 'Witchgate' was just around the corner.

If you haven't already, I suggest you read the review of *Blair Witch* on page 73. It was a review that whipped up a forest full of problems, and as I write this column, it has only just started to subside.

[Cue Twilight Zone Theme] It all began one dark night when I decided that after two weeks of festival frolics, followed by immediately having to put Issue 429 to bed, it was time to face my demons and attend a preview of *Blair Witch*. Those that have read this column for any length of time or listened to the **STARBURST Radio Show** will be more than aware of my opinion that the original film, *The Blair Witch Project*, is actually one of the worst horror movies ever made. An atrociously made piece of cinema, and possibly the most overrated movie of all time. I first voiced these opinions way back in Issue 375, in which I stated my dismay at the misconception held by many that *The Blair Witch Project* was the progenitor of *found footage* movies. It wasn't. In fact, it merely used the cloak of found footage

as smoke and mirrors to hide a lack of creative content. The film I genuinely consider to have started off this subgenre was kicked off by my friend, the troubled director Rémy Belvaux, with the incredible *Man Bites Dog*. I say troubled as even on the night we first met, a group of us all ended up in a London jail over an incident with a Tory MP and an arsenal of lemon meringue pies. He was a nihilistic bloke, and that transposed itself into every frame of *Man Bites Dog*. This was, to me, the epitome of found footage - the ability to go on a nihilistic journey as a voyeur, unlike the jump scares and frame-cutting of *TBWP*. Rémy committed suicide ten years ago, and it is criminal that his movie is relatively forgotten while *TBWP* is regarded by some hardcore fanatics as a masterpiece of modern cinema and the originator of the whole found footage craze. In reality, it was neither.

Having absolutely loved *The Guest*, I felt that perhaps director Adam Wingard could have done something with *Blair Witch*. Perhaps made something of the mythology. I was to be disappointed beyond belief. If you have read the review, then you will know just how much I hated this unnecessary pseudo-sequel that poorly hides its real status as a dodgy remake. In response to one of our writers, later on Facebook, I suggested that it

would have been a perfect substitute for waterboarding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. A hasty confession would surely be secured by a day of this celluloid aberrance screened on a loop. Obviously, my review was not going to be pretty.

The review was written with the usual irreverent style of STARBURST, and with an acerbic, over the top sarcastic quality that is just the way I write. It was published online on Sunday, September 11th, 2016. That is the point that things started to go south. I had not seen the movie at the standard press screening, so was not bound by an embargo of Monday, September 12th, 2016. So effectively, and without realisation, I had produced the world's first negative review.

This was immediately picked up by **Rotten Tomatoes**, and placed in the centre of the first page of (at that stage), about six glowing reviews (not in any way placed there by the studio, as they would never do a thing like that!). So, there it was on the front of the **Rotten Tomatoes - Blair Witch** page, with the quote, "Avoid this film at all costs. If you later find that any of your friends or family actually liked this movie, then we suggest you disassociate yourself from them, and avoid them at all costs too, as they will only disappoint you somewhere down the line", to lure angry *Blair Witch* nutters to the STARBURST website, to be subjected to me taking an axe to the forest, so to speak. Obviously, those people were not aware of the irreverent house writing style of the magazine, or my somewhat barbed approach to life. The onslaught was swift and brutal.

Immediately, the comments underneath the review began to congregate. "You sound like an entitled brat, and if this is actually your career, you have a lot to learn," commented 'William'. 'Maccorff' considered my piece to be a "comically loathsome review" (that, err, actually WAS the point). Ignorance and stupidity were dialled up to 11 by 'Joseph': "This is not a movie meant for sniffing critics who like dramas exclusively. The least you could do is judge it from a person's



perspective who actually likes these types of movies. Judging by the overall consensus, this is clearly not a one-star movie. I'm sick of snotty critics who only like one kind of movie". Wowzers, 'Joseph' is indeed a special little sausage. He reads a review put out by this magazine that exclusively covers fantasy cinema, and suggests that maybe someone into horror films should have reviewed it! At least I managed to guarantee some box office from boneheaded 'Steven', who exclaimed, "This review is so obnoxious and the writer is such an unpleasant person that it's actually making me more excited to see the movie". Don't worry, though, 'Steven' is obviously capable of convincing himself that he had a great cinematic experience irrespective of reality. Seemingly, I actually helped 'Jay' with his career choices as he concluded, "This article reminds me why I'm not a film critic. I could never be this joyless or bitchy". Oh, I don't know, I am sure that after ninety minutes of this movie, he will have certainly managed the joyless quotient.

Whilst the review comments continued to arrive, they had found me on Twitter and also grabbed my email address off the website. Instantly my inbox started to fill with emails that, whilst not trying to spam me with offers of penis extensions and cheap Viagra, were equal in suggesting what I could do with my genitalia. 'Daniel' suggested that **TBWP** directors Ed and Dan "take you out to the Burkittsville woods, and castrate you". That seemed a bit harsh. I did at least give it 1 out of 10! According to 'Sarah', I am having a pronounced effect on the environment akin to global warming: "as a psychology major, I feel the anger inside you spilling out, making the world a more unpleasant place because you are in it!" Ouch! 'Sarah' needs to remember that this is the **Blair Witch** mythology under discussion. No need for the harsh words, there are plenty of sticks and stones lying around. 'David Campbell' has some advice for the editor of **STARBURST**: "Hopefully you will reconsider printing any more reviews from this writer. It's beneath you." Yeah, I will have a word with myself and get back to him in due course. Meanwhile, back in the comments section another **Blair Witch** whack job comes to a conclusion...

'Brita' says: "We get it, you're sooo much smarter than everyone else. Congratulations". To be honest, smarter than *everyone* is a bit of a stretch, but I am definitely smarter than 'Brita' who takes time out of her call centre job to abuse me over a film she hadn't seen yet. 'Jesse' labels me: "an obnoxious polemicist", which prompted a speedy consultation with an online thesaurus before I pretty much nodded in agreement. 'Everyone' seemed concerned for me (was this really from *Everyone*? I think they may be disingenuous): "You must be so alone. Please quit. You're very, very bad at this". Well, you can't argue with 'Everyone', can you? 'Pete' proclaimed: "I really liked the

movie! But then I really liked the original. Guess I might be a vacuous, chin-stroking individual!" Err, no comment!

Still, they continued to arrive. 'Jack Saint Hunter' was happy to explain how wrong I was: "You do realise that this movie is most likely the best movie of found footage since **TBWP** right?!? I bet you couldn't even make a decent porno movie due to the fact that you couldn't 'measure up'. You need to re-watch **Bambi** and take some morality notes". Where does one begin? Well, I guess the fact that the movie (that he had not watched, and had not been released at the time he wrote his comment) has subsequently dropped off a cinematic box office cliff, answers the first bit of bilge. As for the porno and **Bambi** comments, well I guess he must have had a really interesting childhood! 'Chinstroker' (I see what he did there!), described me as "a faeces thrower, bantering words about like an aggravated chimpanzee". Well an infinite amount of them can produce the complete works of Shakespeare, so, not all bad? Then we got to hear the views of the biggest loser of this tragic mob. 'Scott' really got his knickers in a right old twist: "my original intention in visiting the site today was to subscribe to the magazine". Yeah. Course it was. "...but having read your pretentious outburst, and then checking one of my issues of the mag to confirm that you are actually its editor, I will not pick up an issue ever again". (I bet he does!) "...you sir, are an ASS!"

When I \*coughed\* out a few links to sites relating the catastrophic performance of **Blair Witch** at the box office, Scott was undeterred, "Perhaps you should consider apologising for being unnecessarily insulting to people rather than acting so \*cough\* smug about it". So, I posted this picture of Scott as a baby...



Scott was quick to express his gratitude: "How frighteningly mature of you, what a professional class act you are...Seriously, though, thank you for that as now I know you are just pathetic..." The most serious of many problems with Scott is that he has got to *want* to change...

To be clear, the review was written in a way that was not meant to be taken seriously. The digs were not aimed at fans of **TBWP**, or horror fans that like the movie. It was a jibe at a very tiny minority that eulogises the movie as a modern classic of the horror genre. A game-changing horror movie. To quote the review, "the

sort of vacuous, chin-stroking individual that thought **The Blair Witch Project** was a masterclass of modern filmmaking". Sadly, this bunch of nutters, when not stood in a corner masturbating over a pile of twigs and stones whilst wearing a snorkel parka, indulge in embarrassing keyboard warrior antics when anyone DARES to suggest that their beloved film is actually a little bit shit. How shit? Well, the only key reveal of the entire movie, the backstory that explains why the final scene has Mike stood facing a corner, was shot and added after a bad preview screening. Originally, it just ended like that for no real reason. Pathetic filmmaking. An overrated riff on Jean-Paul Sartre's play **No Exit** that hit big due to the excellent first viral Internet campaign that promoted it as being real.

With regards to **Blair Witch**, I stand by the original review. It may be harsh, but it is absolutely the worst movie I have seen this year. An atrocious and disorientating mess, with artificial 'interruptions', and hyped up sound design that only serves to make it more excruciating to watch than the original. It's not even a movie; it's the celluloid equivalent of a war crime. If I have stopped one person from wasting their time and money on this garbage, then my work here is done...

Horror also struck out with Rob Zombie's **31**. Since making one of my favourite horror/road movies **The Devil's Rejects**, Rob has not been on form. **31** continues the downward trend with a redneck version of **The Running Man** that, despite tons of violence and exaggerated visuals, just ends up being one more embarrassment on the CV of Malcolm McDowell. The whole redneck/Deep South shtick could do with a long rest now as far as I am concerned.

I feel it necessary to at least make one recommendation after all this \*ahem\* negativity. If you really want to try something genuinely weird in horror, then I can recommend Turkish horror film **Baskin**. I only caught up with this recently, and as stated it is weird but the intensity and atmosphere make for a gripping watch. I also liked the bad guys. Evocative of **Hellraiser** and **Nightbreed**, they are a bizarre bunch. In particular, Mehmet Cerrahoglu, who plays the Father, is an electrifying presence on screen. It isn't for everyone, but it's certainly one of the best horror movies out this year. Most importantly, it's a proper movie with structure, story, atmosphere and solid performances. Not some badly shot, booga-booga, jump scare porn.



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